

NEW EDITION OF MR. WHITESIDE'S WORK ON ITALY.

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ITALY

IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

By the Right Hon. JAMES WHITESIDE, M.P., LL.D.

Third Edition, abridged and revised ; with a New Preface chiefly on the Events which have occurred in Italy since 1848.

OPINIONS *of the* PRESENT EDITION.

“THE interest of Mr. Whiteside’s elaborate work on Italy centres in its obvious truthfulness, its picturesqueness, its strong pictures of Italian society, its fervour, and its instructive character. It throws a full, clear light upon present events, and conveys to the reader’s mind a very full and living acquaintance with the course of that struggle of principles of which Italy has long been, and still is, the theatre.....In abridging this work Mr. Whiteside has removed almost the sole objection to his *Italy* as originally published. The author now comes before the public with a sound title to perusal. An abridged second edition is generally a superior book; and in this instance Mr. Whiteside has pruned away redundancies with unsparing hand. His former three volumes are here compressed within the compass of one; and in its new shape the work is not only more convenient but more readable. All the racy passages remain; the style is often mended; the facts are more compact; the whole texture of the work is closer; and it now presents a Picture of Italy in which the details are well worked out, which deals impartially with matters calling for a judicial spirit, and never omits the assertion of what is true and just against what is mere mockery and wickedness. Many a more philosophical book on Italy exists; but none is, on the whole, more interesting, or has a greater quantity of information attractively arranged.”

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“WE are sure that many of our readers will hail this opportune publication, at a time when we are all looking towards Italy, waiting for the next act of the drama which is being played out before the eyes of this generation. The three volumes of which the work originally consisted are now compressed into one; but we do not see that this abridgment has in any respect taken away from the value of the book. Had the name of the author not insured its success, it must have attracted attention from the able manner and philosophical spirit in which this brilliant advocate has treated a very interesting subject. The preface will form a link for the reader from the publication of the book in 1848 to the present time. And we need scarcely call the attention of the public to this result of two years spent in Italy, comprising the last year of the reign of Pope Gregory, and the first of Pope Pius, announcing, as they appear to do, the expiration of ancient political systems, and the inauguration of new and different principles of government. The preface, which is new, is occupied with the momentous changes which have passed over Italy since Mr. Whiteside’s visit; but the observations recorded in the body of the work have no less lively an interest in relation to the present time, although so much has happened since they were first noted down. We all know the attractions of Mr. Whiteside’s sparkling style; but a more sterling merit of this book is its large tolerance and thorough impartiality.”

JOHN BULL.

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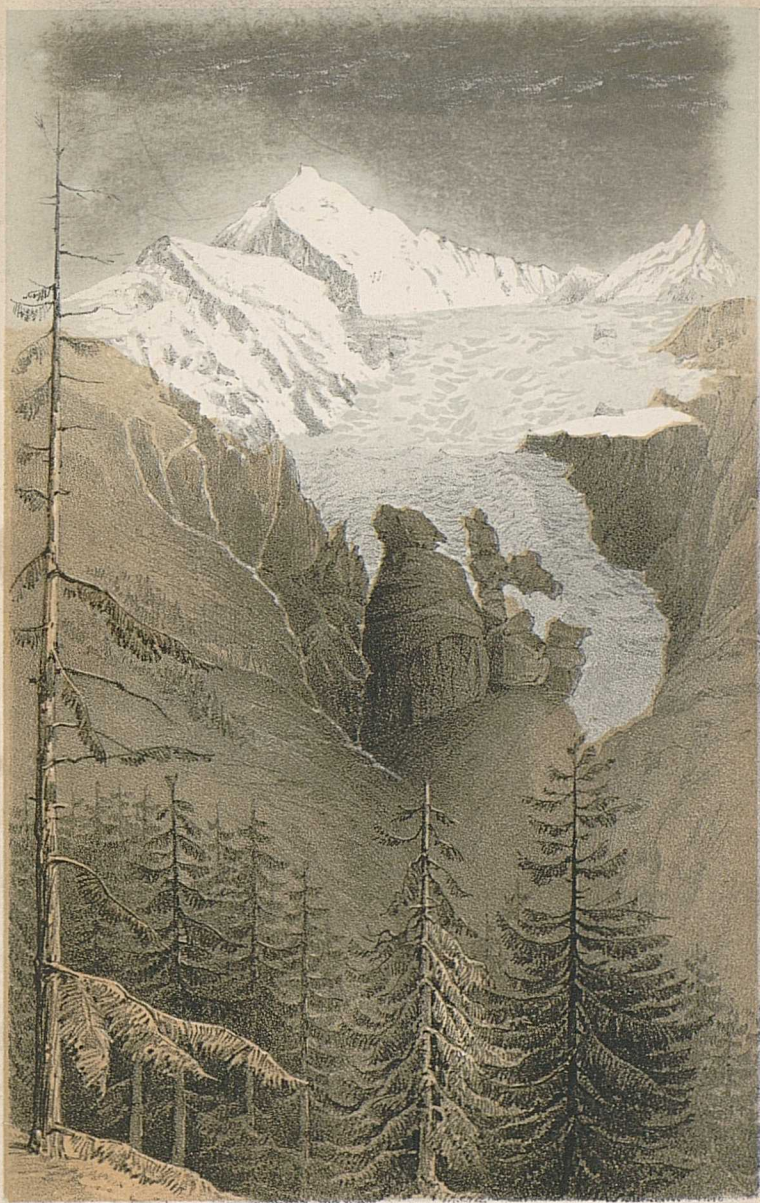
ALPINE BYWAYS

By

Mrs Henry Freshfield

LONDON

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NEW-STREET SQUARE



Hanhart, lith.

THE WEISS HORN.

from above Randa.

[Mrs Henry Freshfield]

ALPINE BYWAYS

OR

LIGHT LEAVES

GATHERED IN 1859 AND 1860



"Although true happiness depends
Neither on clouds, nor days, nor friends,
When friends, and days, and clouds unite,
And kindred cords are tuned aright,
The harmonies of heaven and earth,
Through eye, ear, intellect, give birth
To joys too exquisite to last,—
And yet more exquisite when past!"

LONDON

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS

1861

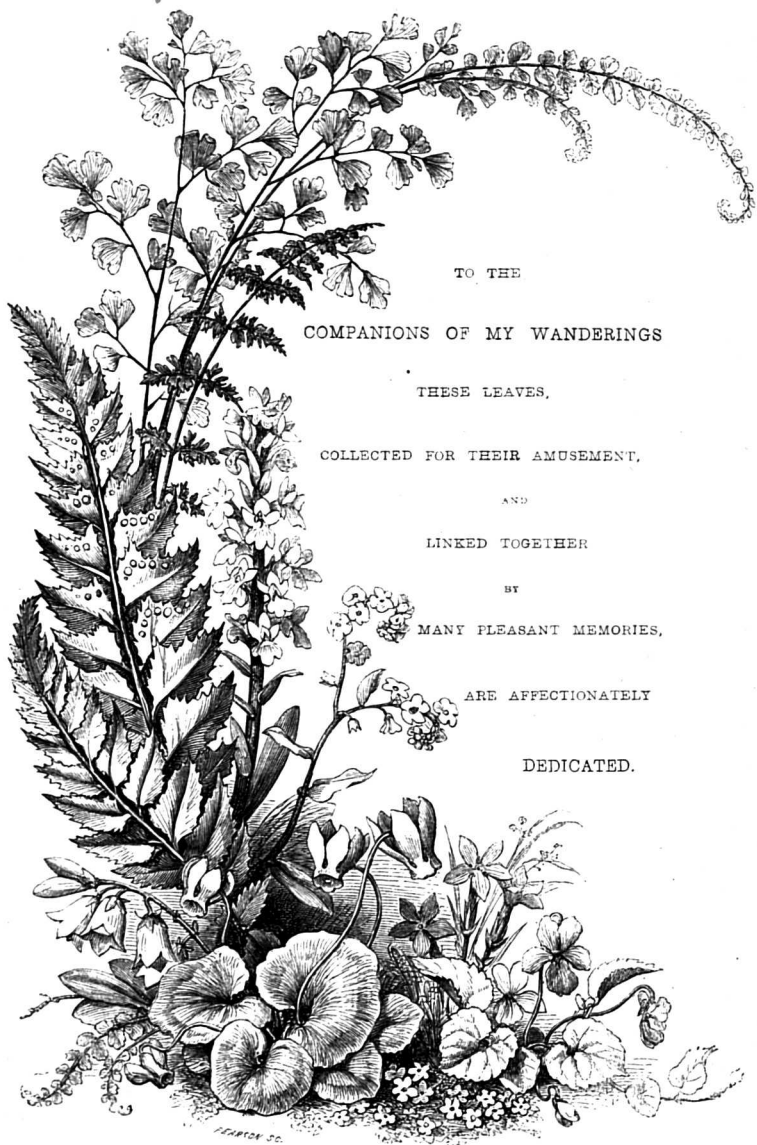
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TO THE
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THESE LEAVES,
COLLECTED FOR THEIR AMUSEMENT,
AND
LINKED TOGETHER
BY
MANY PLEASANT MEMORIES,
ARE AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.



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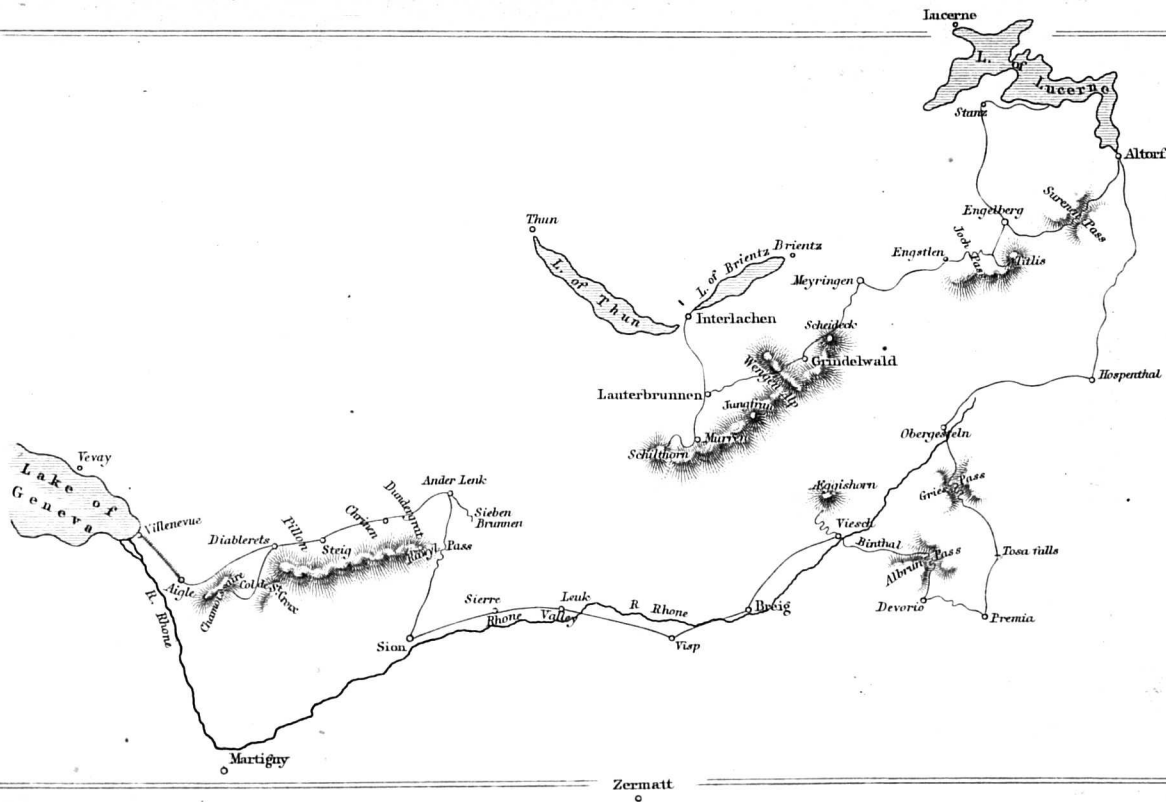
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ANDERLENK	„	72	✓
SIXT, AND THE PIC DE TINNEVERGES	„	96	✓
SAMOËNS	„	112	✓
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OBERLAND	<i>to face page</i>	1	✓
SIXT AND CHAMPERY	„	91	✓
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ALPINE BYWAYS.

CHAPTER I.

“How full of Heaven these solitudes appear !”

THE higher region of the Swiss Alps has been, not inaptly, called “the playground” of England, where the energy, enterprise, and endurance of her grown-up sons find ample scope for exercise amidst “Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers;” the pursuit of health and manly amusement being, in many well-known instances, combined with a keen appreciation of the beauties of nature, and an enthusiastic devotion to scientific research, in the study and development of the long unexplored mysteries of creation, which present themselves in the world of eternal ice and snow.

A widely spread interest in Alpine travel has thus grown up in our family circles, making wives and

sisters seek participation in the pleasures which they hear so vividly described;—one great attraction to this vast “playground” being, that it affords relaxation and amusement, suited to almost every variety of mental and bodily capacity.

Without aspiring to exploits which may be deemed unfeminine, or entailing undue care and responsibility upon their companions, ladies may now enjoy the wildest scenes of mountain grandeur with comparative ease.

During many successive seasons, it has been my good fortune to spend a portion of the summer holidays with my husband and our young son, in Switzerland; where, leaving well-known routes, we have (accompanied by a lady friend) sought to extend our acquaintance with the By-ways and higher passes of the Alps. Such scenes exercise, I believe, a most healthful influence on the mind; aiding us to put aside, for a time, the every-day cares and too engrossing interests of life, and filling it

“Not with the works of man,
But with high objects — with enduring things ;
With life and nature — purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought.”

In youth, especially, the tone of character is elevated, and the perception of beauty strengthened,

by being thus led to recognise the presence of the Creator in His glorious works. When listening to the "voices of the mountains," speaking in the thunders of the rolling avalanche, or the rushing of the mighty winds, surrounded by wondrous combinations of grandeur and beauty, we realise something of the vastness of an Almighty power; and the words of praise seem naturally to arise, as expressed in our sacred song:

" O ye winds of God !
O ye ice and snow !
O ye frost and cold !
O ye mountains and hills !
O *all* ye works of the Lord !
Bless ye the Lord ; praise Him, and magnify
Him for ever."

The taste for such pleasures certainly grows with its indulgence; and this is so well understood that, year by year, rough but sufficient accommodation is provided among the high Alps, to attract visitors to districts previously considered unattainable by ladies.

During our wanderings, we have often been surprised at the slight knowledge possessed by travellers of any but the beaten paths; such knowledge, indeed, where not supplied by "Murray," can be obtained only by the expenditure of time and trouble; and it is frequently difficult to gain any certain

information regarding novel routes, or recently opened inns, beyond what may be gleaned from the "*Livres des Voyageurs*" at the hotels. Experience has taught us the inaccuracy of the accounts given by local guides; and we have constantly found anticipated difficulties vanish upon nearer approach.

It is not without much hesitation that I venture to add a few leaves to the already abundant growth of Alpine literature; but without assuming more than ordinary powers of exertion or endurance, the following selections from my note-book may show what others can accomplish as easily as myself, and may perhaps attract closer observation to the beautiful scenery which is sometimes passed by, because the means of reaching it are not understood.

I have endeavoured to avoid the form of a journal, which can possess no general interest when referring only to well-known highways, or to passes frequently traversed. I have also avoided dwelling even on attractive subjects, to which attention has been already drawn by pens far more competent than my own: but the changing circumstances of season and weather present the same spots under such differing aspects, that the record of varying experiences may be useful;—this has induced me occasionally to touch on well-known scenes.

The comfort and indeed safety of such journeys as we have enjoyed, depends so greatly upon the care and conduct of your guide, that I must gratefully acknowledge the services of our good and tried friend, Michael Alphonse Couttet, one of the best men on the Chamouni roll. He has almost invariably accompanied us, and has justified our implicit confidence in his judgment, quiet decision, and high tone of character. His attendance has been usually secured by previous arrangements for his joining us at the Swiss starting-point of our journey.

Two words of advice I would offer to all who desire to enjoy Alpine scenery in perfection—“Rise early”—and lose not those

“Hues of the rich unfolding morn
That, ere the glorious sun be born,
By some soft touch invisible,
Around his path are taught to dwell”

CHAP. II.

MÜRREN AND THE SCHILTHORN.

AMONG the many travellers who have rested at Lauterbrunnen, and, after gazing on the Staubbach, have passed onwards over the Wengern Alp, very few knew anything of the attractions of the scenery they were leaving behind them, until within the last two years. When the beauties of the upper valley began to excite attention, and occasional wanderers were induced to explore its recesses, an inn was built at the Alpine village of Mürren; and when we arrived at Thun, early in August 1859, we learnt that it was just completed. This intelligence decided us to make Mürren our first resting-place among the mountains.

Leaving Thun by the early boat at six o'clock, we enjoyed the freshness of the morning air upon the beautiful lake, and afterwards had a lovely drive from Interlachen to Lauterbrunnen; from whence

it is a walk of only three hours to Mürren. The weather was very warm; we must necessarily be exposed to the full blaze of the mid-day sun, and we were glad to procure horses to carry us up the mountain side. The path begins to ascend at once, and rises rapidly until it passes above the Staubbach falls, winding through pine woods, where every turn opens out more glorious views.

After leaving the forest, we wound gradually upwards, by a kind of terrace path, commanding one of the most magnificent combinations of scenery in Switzerland. The valley of Lauterbrunnen lies deep beneath you, at the foot of inaccessible precipices. The opposite mountains rise nearly perpendicularly; their gigantic height and massive grandeur making them appear almost close, although their actual distance must be about two miles. Immediately opposite, the Black Mönch rises like a wall; above which, but a little to the right, rises the beautiful Silberhorn: above which, again, towers the Jungfrau. To the left are the Mönch (nearly concealed by its black namesake); the Eiger, rising in a magnificent cone; and to the extreme left, the three peaks of the Wetterhorn. To the right are seen the Mittaghorn, the Grosshorn, the Breithorn, the Tschingelhorn, and Gspaltenhorn; the whole

forming a range of the sublimest snow peaks, defended by a rampart of rocks and glaciers. In the far distance, the fall of the Schmadribach is discovered; making a bold spring from its icy bed in the Tschingel glacier, and losing itself in the wooded depths below.

The hotel at Mürren is very picturesquely placed, on a projecting green knoll, at the entrance of the scattered hamlet, which is said to be the highest village in Switzerland inhabited all the year round. It is sheltered by a back ground of broken hills, and immediately faces the magnificent precipices which I have attempted to describe.

We found a most attentive host, and had our choice of rooms, for the house was empty when we arrived. All looked clean and sufficiently comfortable, so we selected those which would give the morning view of the Jungfrau. Later in the afternoon we walked up the hill (which Murray calls one of the summits of the Schilthorn), and were fully repaid for our scramble over rough ground and thick underwood, by the lovely sunset view which we enjoyed after the height was gained. On our return we were amused by watching the goats, gathering together from the upland pastures at the shepherd's call; they preceded us to the village, and dropped off gradually to their several homes.

Our intention was to remain only one night at Mürren, but we were charmed with the scenery, and now first heard of the beautiful panorama from the Schilthorn, which was within reach from hence. In the course of the evening my son found a "Practical Guide," in which it was mentioned, and his interest being excited, he turned to the useful "Livre des Voyageurs," which contained several accounts of ascents, in some of which ladies were of the party. Couttet was then consulted, and the result of his enquiries being favourable to D——'s wishes, we determined to alter our plans, and devote the next day to the expedition.

The height of the Schilthorn is upwards of 9000 feet (about 1000 feet higher than the Faulhorn), and the summit was said to be full four hours' walk from Mürren.

The morning greeted us with a cloudless sky, and at five o'clock we were *en route*, with an old man belonging to the village as our guide; a cool fresh air making the early walk delightful. After leaving Mürren and winding round wooded slopes, the path came out on open pastures, with a splendid view up the valley, and towards the Sefinenthal. There is a rough way down the mountain side to Trachsellaünen, whence there is a car road back to

Lauterbrunnen. The Schmadribach falls are but a short distance above Trachsellaunen, so that, by a little previous arrangement, a visit to them might be easily and most pleasantly combined with Mürren, in an excursion up the valley.

Turning towards the mountain on our right, the path led us for nearly an hour and a half over the pastures, where the dewdrops sparkled in the sunshine, until we reached a group of cattle chalets. To this point there would be no difficulty in riding, if mules were retained at Mürren for the excursion. We then rose gradually, with the peak called by our guide, "Der Kleine Schilthorn," immediately above us. We thought our course was to be over a grassy Col, rather to the left, but the guide turned in the contrary direction, and we should certainly have been quite at a loss without his help. There was no defined track, and we had to climb up steep, rough rocks, where the mountain side was intersected by water-courses, which it was sometimes rather difficult to cross. At one place the precipitous face of the rock was worn quite smooth, the only means of passing for a few yards being some roughly-chipped ledges, affording precarious foothold, where a slip would have had unpleasant consequences.

The old man was in front with my friend, to whom

he was very devoted, a few words in German having found their way to his heart! Seeing me rather behind the rest of the party, with Couttet, he evidently feared I might not be sufficiently cared for; and, greatly to C——'s amusement, he declined to go forward without me, suggesting, rather reproachfully, "Wir müssen für die alte Frau warten."

The sun had now power, and it needed good courage to gain the top of the first steep ridge, where we found ourselves in a kind of basin, shut in by precipitous, rocky walls and débris, enclosing a gloomy little lake, formed by the melting snow.

Here we rested for a few minutes, on a sward enamelled with Alpine gems, in full summer beauty; with a glorious view of mountain and valley. Above us the true Schilthorn raised its snowy head beyond the lesser summit by which it had hitherto been concealed.

Our way now became rough, over loose stones and shale, which gave way under the feet; then we crossed a bed of snow, succeeded by another rapid ascent to the lower point. Here the view was very grand and extensive. Nothing could exceed the glorious beauty of the mountains on the further side of the Lauterbrunnen valley, as they stood before us during the whole walk; while nearer attractions were

not wanting — the flowers scattered around our path were lovely, and we also found pretty specimens of crystals among the rocks.

• The summit was still considerably above us, united to our present position by a narrow and very rugged *arête*, along which we passed, skirting the snow on one side, while on the other the rocks descended precipitously below us. D—— led the way up the last steep scramble, and stood triumphantly on the top to welcome us. We were astonished at the magnificence of the surrounding panorama, and rejoiced in having accomplished the ascent thus early in the day, before a cloud had risen to dim the glorious beauty of such a scene of dreamlike splendour. Every mountain stood out distinctly: the distant Titlis, quite defined in the far east; the Faulhorn and Wetterhorn guarding the valley of Grindelwald; and the numerous snowy summits of the Oberland uniting with the range in the foreground, which extended in a line of ever-varying beauty, from the Jungfrau to the Tschingelhorn, and overshadowed the deep valley of Lauterbrunnen. Farther on, to the right, the Blumlis Alp was lovely in the bright sunshine. Then the Altels, and mountains above the Gemmi; with the Great Combin in the far distance, which rose

beyond the valley of the Rhone. The Wildstrubel and Wildhorn, with their glaciers, marked the position of the Rawyl Pass, a district with which we hoped soon to be better acquainted. Comparatively at our feet, a spur from the Schilthorn descended to the Kienthal, from whence mingled hill and valley stretched down to the Lake of Thun, where, gleaming in sunshine, the chateau and buildings of the town were clearly seen. Immediately opposite to us on that side, the wall-like precipices of the Schithorn shut out the valley towards Interlachen. Although the sun had now become powerful, the air was fresh and cool. For two hours we enjoyed the most delightful rest, while endeavouring to impress upon our minds the principal features of the lovely panorama. It was indeed one of those "things of beauty," of which the remembrance might be cherished as "a joy for ever."

Meantime the contents of a knapsack which the guide had carried up received due attention, and proved most acceptable; after which, quite invigorated, we thought it was time to descend to the lower world. The loose stony surface made the walk disagreeable, and in order to avoid the ridge of rock, the old man led straight across the snow field which it skirted. Couttet saw that in many places

the snow had melted, leaving the ice below exposed, and he instantly exclaimed, "C'est trop glissant." In a moment his warning proved true, for my friend and D——, who were following close behind the guide, quickly lost their footing. At first there seemed some danger of their taking a shorter downward course than was desirable; but fortunately the slope was not steep, and my son readily stopped himself with his alpenstock. It was C——'s first experience on the ice. As she was not accustomed to the use of her pole, it escaped from her hand, to pursue its own vagaries, leaving her unable to rise, until Couttet hastened to her assistance. The old man, meantime, seeing that D—— could take care of himself, followed the wandering alpenstock, which had rested at some distance below in a bed of snow. Couttet then insisted on our returning to the rougher, but more secure, footing of the rocks; where we met a French gentleman, on his way to the summit. After leaving the lower Schilthorn, we varied our route in descending to the lake, and found it easier than the ascent, although we passed through several beds of wet snow. Below the Col, the grass slope was very steep and slippery, and the rocky ledges made care requisite. We were therefore glad when the *mauvais pas*

was passed, and we again reached the upper pastures, which are watered by a stream forming a succession of cascades, as it finds its way down the rocky mountain sides. Near the group of chalets below, the stream was crossed by a rough bridge, and a large herd of cattle was scattered around over the meadows, producing a pretty pastoral scene, as we wound our way down. The short, springy turf under our feet was very enjoyable after our rough scramble. The air too was deliciously scented with the freshly cut thymy herbage: but under an almost cloudless sky the heat had become intense, and we were thankful when the shelter of the wood was reached; nor were we sorry when Mürren appeared in the distance, and we felt that our work was done. We arrived at the hotel before three o'clock, having occupied four-and-a-half hours in the ascent, and nearly three-and-a-half in returning: — but we had walked slowly, and lingered by the way. An hour's rest before dinner was very pleasant, but no one of the party was over-tired, and we added our testimony to the "Livre," decidedly recommending the expedition as fully repaying the exertion it requires.

I have since been much amused at finding the Schilthorn invested with the charms and terrors of romance, by the imaginative author of "Julian

Home," who makes it the scene of such extraordinary perils, that the fears of nervous ladies may be needlessly excited by his account. Allowance must be made for the licence of fiction; and young people who wander about after dark, and lose their way on unknown mountains, may expect to encounter difficulties. Yet it seems scarcely necessary to transform a harmless Swiss shepherd into a brigand, and an alpine chalet into a robber's den, in order to help the *dénoûment* of a love story!

Several travellers had arrived during the day, and we were joined at dinner by two Englishmen, who had found their way up to Mürren from the Schmadribach falls. They described it as a very rough scramble, but without any real difficulty, and we almost regretted that our arrangements for the morrow did not allow us to return to Lauterbrunnen by that route. While daylight lasted, we sat out on the balcony, enjoying the last gleams of the setting sun, as

"The golden light
Faded into a cold and clouded grey,
Then into darkness."

At night we proved that wooden walls do not tend to repose, especially when a snoring or talkative German is on the other side of the panel near

which your head rests; and a late arrival promenades over head in heavy boots! Sleep came at last, and all seemed quiet for the night, when we were roused up by a sudden storm, which swept down from the mountains, blowing open the windows, and admitting a shower of hail.

We feared a change of weather, but the morning was again lovely, and we watched the light break over the mountains as we made our toilets, at an early hour, in order to walk down to Lauterbrunnen while the air was cool and enjoyable. The views were most beautiful as we descended; and from the meadows below, the Staubbach appeared in perfection, after the heavy rain of the previous night, the cloudlike spray glittering like a silvery web.

Horses had been ordered in readiness, and we soon started again, en route to Grindelwald and Meyringen.

CHAP. III.

ENGELBERG AND THE TITLIS.

WE knew nothing of the country between Meyringen and the upper end of the Lake of Lucerne, and our wish therefore was to cross the mountains by the Joch Pass, to Engelberg, and thence by the Surenen to Altorf.

It was not easy to gain information, but we learnt that a small inn, recently opened near the chalets of Engstlen, on this side the pass, would be decidedly the best resting-place; especially as we hoped to combine an ascent of the Titlis with our next day's journey.

The distance to Engstlen was so easy (only five hours' ride), that we were tempted to indulge in breakfast at seven o'clock, and not to start for an hour later, when we found four good-looking and well-furnished horses in readiness, with two men to accompany them. The elder one professed to be

well acquainted with the pass, and quite competent to act as guide to Engelberg. The young man did not know the way, but he seemed intelligent, and could understand and speak a little French; which was an advantage with Couttet, whose ignorance of German was often a difficulty in the Oberland, when arranging with the men. The heat was so great when we started, that we soon regretted the early hours which we had lost at Meyringen, especially as the road up the valley, as far as Imhoff, was exposed to the full glare of the sun. There we turned to the left, and had a very pretty ride, with an excellent road up the Gadmenthal. After crossing the river, and passing a most picturesque water-mill, we left the beaten path (which continues on, by the Susten Pass, to Wesen on the St. Gothard), and turning suddenly upwards, we gained the welcome shelter of a thick forest. The way was evidently very little used, and apparently no horses had passed this season, for the overhanging branches put our heads in jeopardy, and we soon dismounted, leaving the animals to clamber up the steep rocky staircases as best they could. We had remarked that the man hesitated where two tracks separated, but he would not acknowledge himself at fault; however we soon felt certain that he had mistaken the path, and brought

us by a short cut only used by pedestrians. When nearly at the top, we met two boys, who confirmed our impressions, and showed us where the easier way joined that we had followed. The old man looked extremely sulky, and pretended to be very deaf when we accused him of ignorance. His mistake on this occasion, however, was of no consequence, except to the horses, for after the top of this col was gained, the rest of the journey was very easy. Our route traversed the whole length of the Engstlen-thal, a long pasture valley, with few signs of habitation, and possessing no great attractions until, after crossing the stream two or three times, we passed a pretty cascade, and saw some chalets scattered on the slopes before us, on the verge of the pine woods through which the last hour's ascent to the inn is made.

We had for some time watched heavy clouds gathering behind us over the Oberland, and rolling together in ominous masses up the valley. Large drops now warned us of the near approach of the threatened storm, and we hurried on for shelter to some chalets which were fortunately within reach. The buildings were evidently used for storing the hay for winter use, and there were no signs of habitation, but we looked to the wide eaves as a welcome shelter, until D——'s spirit of investigation led

him to pull open a door, and we found the interior unexpectedly clean and inviting. It had evidently been unoccupied since the fresh sweet hay was housed, and we did not hesitate to take possession of the good quarters thus provided. The hay was piled in square blocks about five feet high, in three of the corners, leaving a passage between; the fourth was supplied with a manger; and while we established ourselves comfortably upon the hay, the horses, which shared our shelter, helped themselves unceremoniously to the good dinner so temptingly set before them.

During the heavy storm of thunder and lightning, accompanied by pouring rain, which kept us prisoners for an hour, we amused ourselves by examining the capabilities of our retreat. Some loose planks laid across the rafters overhead formed a loft, and added to the warmth of one end of our *salon*. An inner door led into a small outhouse, where a hearthstone and chimney showed a fire might be kindled; and on a shelf, a small bowl, an iron pot and wooden spoon supplied cooking apparatus in case of need. We all agreed that travellers might be much worse off for a night's lodging than in such quarters; although under such circumstances it might be more agreeable to dispense with the company of the horses under the same roof.

I was anxious to know how payment could be made to the peasants whose hay had been so unceremoniously appropriated, a matter about which the men's consciences did not seem troubled. My remonstrances were answered by an assurance that a trifle would be left in the bowl, but I had little faith in the intention being fulfilled.

The storm having passed off, we remounted in comfort, for an hour's further ride, principally through a pine forest. After admiring another very picturesque waterfall, we reached a remarkable spring called the "Wunderbrunnen," where the water is said to flow only at certain hours of the day. Just above the forest the chalets of Engstlen appeared, with the inn placed in a sheltered position amidst the wildest and most dreary scenery. Looking back down the Engstlenthal, the distant Oberland range, with the Schreckhorn and Wetterhorn conspicuous beyond the valley of Meyringen, were very fine; while in front the rugged line of the Joch pass, above which the Titlis rose grandly amidst mountain and glacier, closed the upper valley.

It was still early in the afternoon when we arrived at the inn, where we found all needful accommodation, with an intelligent and attentive landlord, who seemed anxious to merit the high recommendations

bestowed on him in the "Travellers' Book." C—— hoped to have spent an hour pleasantly in getting a sketch of the scene around, but another shower came on. The rest of the day was damp and gloomy, and we began to feel anxious about our journey the next morning. Our host was consulted about the necessary arrangements, and we were told that gentlemen often started to ascend the Titlis at one or two o'clock, A.M. ! We had no fancy for crossing the Joch by the light of a lantern, so that suggestion was decidedly negatived; and finally it was arranged that, if the weather was favourable, we should be called at three o'clock.

The uncertainty was too exciting to allow us to sleep very soundly, and when I looked out at two o'clock, heavy clouds were scudding about, with mist driving over the mountains. We heard no signs of preparation until past four, when we were told that appearances were improving. We finished dressing quickly, but the host assured us it was useless to hurry, and we waited, I fear not patiently, watching the Oberland range gradually coming into view. Summit after summit cleared, and as the wind came from that quarter, our hopes of a fine day strengthened, until at five o'clock it was thought prudent to start. Just as we mounted at the door of

the inn, the Wetterhorn and its snow-capped neighbours caught the beautiful blush of early day, and this sight alone was worth the hour's delay in leaving Engstlen.

We found our party increased by two men, recommended by the landlord, whom Couttet had engaged as guides up the Titlis. The younger one carried ropes and a hatchet, preparations which gave D—— great satisfaction, as showing that some real ice-climbing might be expected. The ascent is apparently rather an unusual one for ladies, and even while thus providing the necessary aid for our enterprise, I suspect that the good folks at Engstlen were somewhat incredulous as to its accomplishment.

In a few minutes we reached the margin of a lake, which the wet had prevented C—— and myself from exploring the previous afternoon. The narrow path which we followed wound above it for about half-an-hour, rising gradually to the base of a steep ascent, with the snowy Titlis, now quite clear from clouds, full in view. The whole scenery was most striking in its stern grandeur, with rocky-crested summits frowning around us. Then the summit of the pass being gained, a splendid and extensive view of a new district, and combination of mountains, burst

upon us, extending towards the Lake of Lucerne. Far beneath was another small lake, called the Trübsee; and near its further extremity, where some cattle looked like mice upon the pastures, the guide pointed out a solitary chalet, where travellers sometimes found very rough shelter for a night, before the Engstlen inn was opened. The men and horses from Meyringen were here to leave us, and they received directions to descend to a spot below the Trübsee (which the old man professed to know), there to await our return from the Titlis, no doubt existing that we should then gladly ride the remaining two hours' journey to Engelberg. Our party thus divided, we turned to the right, and had a rough scramble over rocks, followed by a short but rapid descent, in order to get across a bed of snow, apparently the remains of an avalanche. An alpine cry here awoke the mountain echoes, and we soon caught sight of two travellers, who proved to be an Englishman and his guide from Engelberg. Such meetings are always a pleasant excitement in these solitudes; and while a few words were interchanged we had time to admire the becoming costume of our countryman, quite à la Tyrolienne. Couttet (who found an acquaintance in the guide) told us that he had seen "Monsieur" last year at Chamouni, when he had

ascended Mont Blanc. Now we climbed up steep pastures, crossed watercourses, and over soft loose shingle, until we reached a ridge of rocks, which projected into the valley, and descended in abrupt precipices on the other side. It was a magnificent position, immediately overlooking a vast glacier, with Engelberg almost lost in the depth below. The snowfield was still to be attained, with the summit far above shining clear and bright for our encouragement. After resting for a few minutes, we began the scramble up a very rough and steep *arête*, where some queer and precipitous rocky corners tested the steadiness both of head and feet. The mountain views on all sides were splendid, and called forth repeated exclamations of admiration as we advanced. Suddenly, amidst rugged desolation, affording no apparent sustenance for animal life, where one might have said—

“How bleak and bare it is — nothing but mosses
Grow on these rocks,”

we were excited by seeing a hare start in front of us. After a moment's hesitation the frightened creature took its course upwards, and was quickly lost to us in the snow. After creeping very carefully round a slippery rock, we found ourselves on the verge of the glacier, with a yawning crevasse immediately in

front, below which the icy stream descended rapidly towards the valley, ending in a grand row of glittering pinnacles. A slip in such a spot would be fatal; and we readily acquiesced in the prudence of using the ropes, which had been brought for such an emergency. The younger guide then led the way, followed by H——, our son, and myself, with Couttet's support between me and C——; the senior guide, who was very efficient, bringing up the rear.

We thus passed over an extensive snowfield, much intersected with crevasses, several of which we crossed on snow bridges. Then we reached the foot of a steep slippery brow, where the snow having melted had left an icy surface exposed, offering no possible foothold until the hatchet was used. The first guide therefore cut step by step as we advanced, and we soon found our upward progress comparatively easy. C—— ventured to suggest, "How are we to get down?" but it was better to postpone the consideration of that question until the time came. An unexpected difficulty now arose: my husband complained of feeling uncomfortable and rather faint, and when we again reached deep snow, through which the walking was really fatiguing, his breathing became oppressed and painful. What was to be done in such a dilemma? It was impossible to

let him rest, and he would not listen to our proposal of returning, so, after a short delay, we continued our progress, but necessarily very slowly.

We gladly hailed a narrow ridge of rock, clear from snow, and fancied that the summit was just above us; but a deceitful hollow intervened, and there was yet another plunge through very deep snow; then all our energies were exerted for one more effort, and the highest point was gained. The sun shone brightly upon us, and fortunately the wind was neither high nor cold. We quickly arranged a resting-place for H——, where, sheltered by a cairn of stones, he soon revived after taking a little restorative, and was able to enter into our delighted enjoyment of the sublime scene around us. There was sufficient *brouillard* to obscure the distant horizon, but the panorama was magnificent; carrying the eye over ranges of mountain and grand glaciers, where

“Frost reigns everlastingly — and ice and snow
Thaw not.”

Beyond the deep valley of Engelberg the Wal-lenstock and Uri Rothstock were prominent amidst a wilderness of peaks, which intervened before a glimpse was gained of the Lake of Lucerne. To

the left, the Blankenstock and Schlossberg marked the line of the Surenen Pass. On a perfectly clear day the view northward is said to extend to Strasbourg Cathedral: this is a matter of faith, the truth of which we had no opportunity of testing. To the east, the Alps of Glarus loomed beyond the valley of the Reuss, bearing round to the St. Gothard, beyond which the Galenstock rose above the glacier of the Rhone; while nearer to us was the Süstenhorn, guarding the pass to Wesen. The Oberland mountains were never clear, but presented ever-varying forms of beauty as the drifting vapours constantly altered their position, and each snowy summit caught the sunshine.

“And many a pinnacle, with shifting glance,
Through the grey mist, thrust up its shatter’d lance.”

The point on which we stood was dry and free from snow, which enabled us to sit down and enjoy our luncheon while we watched the clouds, which now began to gather together below, blotting out the valley of Engelberg. It was a scene of wild and striking grandeur, very different in character from the calm loveliness upon which we had gazed from the Schilthorn.

Couttet, meantime, had made a discovery; and,

much to our amusement, he now presented me with the "Visitors' Book," which he had found in a tin box stowed away in the centre of the stone pillar. There were no entries of recent date, and lady visitors were apparently not numerous. A pencil enabled us to add our names to the record, and the book was then carefully restored to its hiding-place in the custody of the "Steinmann."

The changing aspect of the weather at midday warned us not to lengthen our stay; and, after spending an hour on the summit, we turned to face the deep snow through which we must plunge. Soon we were able to slide down more rapidly, and when we reached the steep slope of ice, C——'s previous problem was quickly solved. The younger guide took her in charge, and, holding her in a firm grasp, commenced a glissade, which increased to such extreme velocity that H—— looked on in perfect horror, almost expecting to see them both disappear in a crevasse at the end of their career! The man, however, knew well what he was about, as he proved when his pole escaped from his hand, and he threw himself cleverly down in front of C——, to stop her impetus until he could recover the pole. Then, looking triumphantly at the height from which they had descended, he said, very complacently,

“ Sie können sehr gut laufen.” D—— and myself followed rather less rapidly, for at one time Couttet had us both in charge, and his care was great ; but when, after depositing C—— safely on the snow field, the young man returned to us, D—— had the satisfaction of taking a downward flight under his wing. Thus we all descended merrily, and although the snow had become so moist and soft that we sunk in over our knees at almost every step, we reached the rocky *arête* in a quarter of the time which the ascent had occupied. We scrambled down and round the awkwardly-steep corners, often stopping to admire the grand glaciers and magnificent scene around. After resting a few minutes on the ridge, we should have finished the descent very easily, had we not found ourselves entering a dark cloud, which now hung like a canopy over the valley, and quite concealed Engelberg.

The old guide took leave of us about half way down, in order to return the same evening to his home at Engstlen. His companion was to remain until he had led us to the place where the horses were ordered to await us. Meanwhile, the mist grew thicker, and we heard distant mutterings of thunder, which reverberated among the mountains. Soon heavy drops fell, announcing the coming storm ;

then drenching rain and hail rattled on the umbrellas, with which we were fortunately provided. The footway led through spongy underwood, each track being a water-course, and we splashed along without much confidence in our route—the fog and hail making it very difficult to judge of the direction which we were taking. At last, when the storm cleared off, we found ourselves on a projecting knoll, overlooking the lake, where we ought to have received answers to the calls given in the expectation of discovering the retreat of the men and horses. Apparently they were neither within sight or sound. We began to fear that the stupid old man from Meyringen was again in fault, or that they must carelessly have missed the right place, and pursued the bridle way to a lower point, where it again intersects the footpath. There was no alternative but to send the Engstlen guide round to ensure our not leaving the horses behind us, while we continued the descent straight down a very steep and trying path, called the Pfaffenwand. This was an unwelcome addition to our walk, as regarded my husband, who seemed to have strained one of his knees, and nearly exhausted his powers. Couttet hastened on to seek tidings of the wanderers in the valley below, and we followed leisurely, congratulating

ourselves that sunshine had succeeded the storm. Both C—— and I were much too wet to induce us to mount, even if the horses appeared. We therefore decided, when we reached the meadows, to leave D—— with his father, to await the result of the search, while we found our way on to Engelberg, and got things ready for their arrival. We had still a long half hour's walk before us, and the village was quite hidden by a steep wooded hill, beneath which it is situated. Fortunately we thus gained some shelter, for another shower came on. Our wet umbrellas had previously been given into Couttet's charge, and we made our *entré* in somewhat ludicrous plight, with our cloaks over our heads and wet up to our knees.

The appearance of such "unprotected females" evidently created some surprise when we entered the hotel, and said we had come from the Titlis. When our dilemma was understood, the "Angel" and its inmates received us most hospitably, and the good people busied themselves most kindly in providing us with slippers and dry garments; indeed, I might have been fully equipped *à la Suisse* had all their hearty proffers been accepted. Happily there were rooms vacant, and we were just establishing ourselves comfortably, when H—— and D—— rode

up, with attendants and baggage. After some difficulty the men had been discovered, comfortably reposing in a chalet, without any notion of looking out for our approach. Couttet was highly indignant at their conduct, of which he showed his opinion when the question of "bonne-main" arose. Our carpet-bags did not carry an extensive change of garments, but with the aid kindly given and gladly received, we were soon equipped in dry clothes. A good dinner contributed to prevent any ill consequences from our expedition; and in the evening H—— took a walk to survey the village, and came back full of admiration of its lovely situation and picturesque buildings. Among the latter a prominent, but *not* a picturesque object, is the large Benedictine monastery and church, which owns rich possessions around. Although in itself a heavy, unadorned mass of building, it groups well with the village, especially when viewed against the dark background of wood which rises immediately behind.

The following day was Sunday, and the rest was most agreeable. The air was completely cleared after the storm, and all was bright and lovely in the sunshine—the Titlis raising its glittering crest on high, looking quite unattainable. This was a great



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Hanhart, lith.

THE TITLIS, FROM ABOVE ENGELBERG.



fête day, as well as Sunday, and we were much interested in watching the country people constantly passing to and from the church of the monastery. There was a greater variety of good costumes than we had hitherto seen, some of them being peculiar and very pretty. Of course we visited the interior of the church, but did not find it contained any particular attractions. After the morning service the men congregated to play at bowls, while the boys attended upon them seemingly with as much gravity as if it formed part of their Sunday duties. The village scene altogether was one of the most pleasing and picturesque imaginable.

In the evening we walked up the valley towards the pastures of Herrenreüti, where there is a dairy farm, belonging to the convent. Our object was to see a remarkably pretty waterfall, which is evidently a great attraction to the idlers at Engelberg, judging from the various parties which we met rambling in the same direction. I longed to carry home some of the beautiful and delicate ferns, which grew so luxuriantly, and unheeded, on the banks around. The "Flora" of this valley is said to be peculiarly rich, and must be a source of unfailing interest to many of the visitors to this most lovely and secluded spot. Engelberg seems comparatively little known

to English travellers, which is strange considering how easily it is accessible from Lucerne. The principal visitors are French and Germans, with whom the hotel was filled. They come for a course of "petit lait" (a preparation of goat's milk), and are boarded very comfortably for $3\frac{1}{2}$ frs. a day, a small additional charge being made for rooms.

We had intended to cross the Surenen Pass to Altorf, but were led to alter our plans. The Meyringen men and horses had been discharged, and a carriage was engaged to take us down to Beckenreid, on the lake.

My son was the only objector to this change, and half jokingly I suggested that he and Couttet were quite independent, and might take the mountain course, joining us again on the St. Gothard road. This idea was eagerly adopted, and Couttet was gratified at thus having the charge of "le jeune Monsieur." As we did not wish to over-tax his powers, and were anxious that he should arrive at Altorf in good time, it was desirable that D—— should be provided with a horse for the ascent. Here a difficulty arose, for very few horses are kept at Engelberg, and not an animal was to be had, although Couttet tried hard to borrow one at the convent. Fortunately it occurred to me, that as *our* party

was reduced from five to three by this plan, we might travel in a single horse calèche, instead of the carriage and pair which we had secured. A small vehicle stood in front of the hotel, which was available for our use; and H—— having mounted the board in front, to try whether it would afford him a seat by the driver, an amusing scene followed; showing that the demure looking boys here were as full of fun as elsewhere at their age. A party of them quickly seized the shafts, and drew “Papa” off in triumph, amidst shouts of laughter, in which we heartily joined. The result of the trial being satisfactory, as regarded the accommodation of the carriage (for its external appearance little was to be said), a horse was left free for D——’s service, and it was arranged that he should leave with Couttet at four o’clock the next morning.

The weather proved most propitious, and, rather to the amusement of the bystanders, the young traveller started in great spirits, for his expedition across the mountains.

We did not leave until six o’clock, and greatly enjoyed a lovely drive of about three and a half hours down to Stanz and Beckenreid. The steamer came in due time, and we had a charming passage through the finest scenery of the lake, which looked

soft and lovely in the sunshine. At Flüelen we arranged for a good carriage and three horses, to take us up to Hospenthal, and went on at once to Altorf, where we were very soon joined by the mountaineers, who had also greatly enjoyed their walk. D—— described the scenery as differing in character from anything that he had previously seen, from the peculiar forms and grouping, as well as the rich colouring of the mountain crags. The ascent is past the waterfall and the farm of Herrenreüti, up a narrow valley, shut in by snowy peaks, with the huge form of the Titlis closing the backward view. Higher up a steep ascent, which shuts in the valley, is adorned by another pretty waterfall, beyond which a little chapel and some chalets formed a fine point of view, surrounded with remarkable peaks rising in enormous buttresses of red rock, some crowned with grass, others higher up, with snow. The Blankenstock and Schlossberg seemed to guard each side of the pass. The top of the Col is a very narrow ridge, with a splendid view, on looking back, of the Titlis, which is here not a snow-covered peak, as seen from Engelberg, but a mass of perpendicular and broken crags. In front the Dodi and Glarus range stretch out beyond the valley of the Reuss. For the first hour the descent was very steep, over loose rocks, and the scenery

very wild. At one point the travellers were puzzled for a few minutes, for a thick mist rolled up the mountain side, and in the absence of any defined track, Couttet was rather at fault; but it soon cleared off, then passing through a wild gorge for some distance, they turned suddenly to the left, and after mounting for a few minutes to a grassy Col, whence they gained a pretty view over the lake and valley of the Reuss, a sharp descent brought them to Atlinghausen, and half an hour's further walk through orchards, across the valley, to Altorf. The flowers which they saw were very varied and beautiful, and I was presented with a lovely bouquet, to be kept in remembrance of the expedition, in the pleasures of which my son much regretted that we had not all participated.

Our further course was to Hospenthal, where we slept, and then over the Furça, to Obesgesteln, in the valley of the Rhone.

CHAP. IV.

THE GRIES AND ALBRUN PASSES.

It is time that "Murray" should qualify his assertion, that the Gries "is not a pass for ladies." Acting on such authority, many may be deterred from a journey presenting no real difficulties, and offering great attractions; leading, as it does, at once, from the wild grandeur of snow and glacier, to the magnificent falls of the Tosa, and the Italian loveliness of the Val Formazza.

We were anxious to combine the Gries with a visit to the *Ægishorn*, without descending to Domo d'Ossola, and returning over the Simplon. A careful study of the map indicated a route, diverging from Premia, over the Albrun Pass, and by the Binnen Thal to Viesch in the Rhone valley. I had ascertained from Mr. Hinchliff, when we met at Thun, that this course was practicable. We had gathered scraps of information as we drew near; and

during our ride over the Furça to Obergesteln, the young man in charge of my horse assured me that he knew well the cross route which we wished to follow. It was in fact much used for smuggling purposes between Sardinia and Switzerland. He was very anxious that we should retain his services for the whole distance, and said that we should encounter no difficulty, except from the length of the second day's journey ; as it appeared questionable whether there was any sleeping-place between the Val Formazza and Viesch. The civil and attentive landlord at Obergesteln confirmed this account, and as I was fairly mounted, while C——'s horse (called Fritz) was a remarkably clever, useful animal, we decided to keep him. Two more horses were found for my husband and D——.

Some time was spent the next morning in collecting our party. It was six o'clock before we were *en route*, with every prospect of a glorious day as we crossed the meadows to the entrance of the Eginen Thal.

The Gries has been well described by others, but it far surpassed our expectations, both in scenery and general interest. The flowers were exquisitely lovely. Beds of the bright blue gentian, of the paler forget-me-not, with delicate pink and white mosses,

clothed and coloured the rocks; while innumerable varieties of Alpine gems, including the brilliant golden Arnica, afforded objects of admiration. Truly

“Numberless flowers — such as disdain to live
In lower regions, and delighted drink
The clouds before they fall; flowers of all hues,
With their diminutive leaves,— covered the ground,”

as we climbed the steep zigzags to the summit of the Pass. Here we found ourselves on a table-land of glacier, surrounded by towering rocks and snow-fields, forming a scene of desolate grandeur. On looking back, the Oberland Alps were relieved against a clear summer sky. The Finsteraarhorn rose pre-eminent in magnificent beauty, while light floating vapours, occasionally resting mid-way like a wreath, seemed to sever their snowy heads from earth. The sun gave colouring to a picture which would have looked very different in clouds and gloom.

The glacier, which takes about half an hour for the horses to cross, is quite peculiar in character, flat and free from crevasses. On the Italian side the descent was rough and steep, and we much preferred walking to riding. The Val Pommatt, downwards, was wild and generally desolate, until a

small chapel appeared in the distance; clouds of spray, with the sound of many waters, indicating our neighbourhood to the grand fall, where the hitherto quiet Tosa rushes over a huge wall of rocks, and leaps down a perpendicular height of about five hundred feet, in an unbroken succession of long steps. There are many beautiful points of view. We thought the finest was from below, where, after crossing the meadow, a rock projects into the stream, commanding the full grandeur of the fall, and displaying the beauty of its spreading fan-like form. A foreground enriched by graceful trees, which grouped well with the rocks around, combined with the great height and immense body of water, make the falls of the Tosa one of the finest scenes of its kind in Switzerland.

Below the falls, the path became rough, generally paved with uneven blocks of stone, which evidently fatigued the men who accompanied us. We had hints that Formazza would be the best resting-place, but as this would have entirely upset our plans for the next day, we affected not to understand what was said. Moreover, when we arrived at the Osteria, the external aspect was most uninviting. Dirty looking heads were poked out from several of the windows to reconnoitre us, which did not add to its

attractions, and we resolutely refused to dismount. The men then appealed to our feelings on behalf of "Fritz," who had lost half a shoe (so they said) by the way, which his master urged must be replaced.

We saw it was a concerted plan to detain us, so we were firm to our first intentions of sleeping at Premia. When Couttet found "Madame" was decided, and discussion with the men useless, he quietly took my horse's bridle and led the way out of the village. The rest of the party followed, and the men had no alternative but acquiescence, although it was very sulkily accorded.

Below Formazza the scenery of the valley is very lovely, but it is so well known that detailed description is needless. Beautiful as it was, we all welcomed the end of our journey at Premia, where we arrived soon after seven o'clock. The Osteria appeared some degrees better than that which we rejected at Formazza. The rooms were tolerable, and as it was now dusk, we did not investigate them too closely! The cook of the establishment spoke French, instead of the unintelligible patois of the country, which was greatly to Couttet's satisfaction, as he was able to discuss our cross country route, with which Mons. le Cuisinier appeared well acquainted. Meantime the Hospenthal men became excited over their sup-

per, and disposed to make difficulties. They even threatened Couttet that they would return over the Gries, and leave us to find our way onwards as we best could. Their engagement was to take us to Viesch, and fortunately Couttet had the power of the purse, so by a little good management they were brought to reason. We were all tired, and went early to bed, leaving the matter in full discussion. The next morning we found every thing amicably arranged; the men in good humour, and the horses ready for us to start at five o'clock.

In answer to my enquiries, I learnt that poor Fritz had still only half a shoe! Premia possessed no blacksmith, but it was said that such a useful personage might be found at the next village, and one of the men had gone forward to have a shoe prepared. Meantime his master said "*gar nichts*," and the result certainly proved that "it did not signify."

The rich Italian beauty of the Val Formazza begins at Premia, whence an excellent carriage road leads down to Domo d'Ossola. We passed along it for about half-an-hour towards the village of Baceno, between chestnut and walnut-trees, amidst vines hanging in rich luxuriance over trellises. Nothing could exceed the loveliness of the scene, in the fresh-

ness of a dewy summer morning, with the far-stretching valley bathed in soft sunshine, until the distant mountains around Domo d'Ossola closed the horizon.

We turned up a rich valley opening to the right; the village of Croveo, with its large picturesque church, being on the wooded hill-side above. There we were detained a little, while search was made for our man and the horse-shoe. At last he appeared, but without the important article, and all apparent efforts having been in vain, the missing half shoe was quietly produced from the man's pocket, and fitted to its place. It seemed to us that this might as well have been done the previous day, if poor Fritz's comfort had been considered.

The path now led up a narrow but beautiful valley, with Mont Cistella rising above on the left, by the side of a clear brawling stream, which rushed in frequent cascades over the rocks. We then crossed a bridge, and passed under a ruined gateway, which formed part of an ancient tower, with remains of walls on either side, guarding the upper valley. Just beyond was the unattractive village of Osso, through which the path led us. Then again crossing the river, we began decidedly to ascend, making a long sweep round the mountain side. We

were quite puzzled how we were to find our way through the range before us, until after a succession of very steep zigzags (where, being quite exposed to the sun, we felt the heat greatly), the path bore to the left, climbing a wooded shoulder of the mountain. We stopped to take a last look at the lovely view towards Italy, and then turning round a sharp projecting corner to the right, we found ourselves amidst scenery of a totally different character, as we skirted upland pastures, watered by a fine stream, mingled with wooded knolls and shut in by mountain peaks. Both time and trouble must have been bestowed upon the pathway, and the ride throughout had been so extremely beautiful, that we could only wonder it was so little known to travellers.

My husband had been walking on in front for some time. We now saw him in friendly converse with an old peasant, who was trudging by his side, giving him much local information in very tolerable French. The old man accounted for this unusual acquirement, by telling us how he had wandered to distant parts in his early days, when his travels had extended to Paris, and even "Douvres." He had now returned contentedly to the pastoral life of his native valleys, but he was quite pleased thus to have

the opportunity to display his knowledge, and enlighten us.

We had been puzzled by the strangely contradictory answers which we had constantly received to our enquiries, whether, in case of need, sleeping accommodation was attainable on this side of the Albrun Pass. Some people said there *was* an inn, a "grand maison," others as decidedly assured us there was *not*; or, it was suggested that perhaps we might get housed if we sent on notice! These differing reports were all explained when we approached the village of Devorio (or Dovero), which is situated where the narrow valley spreads out into a wide basin, enclosed by mountain crags of most peculiar forms, and very richly coloured. We immediately remarked a newly built and very superior house, standing on a raised terrace, quite above a group of the dirty-looking chalets, of which an Alpine village is usually composed.

Our peasant friend explained that this had been the "Hotel Devorio;" that it was erected by a native of the place, who had early gone forth into the world and speculated so successfully, that on his return he had expended some of his wealth in acquiring property and building this house, which he opened in the summer months as an hotel. Unfortu-

nately, he entered into a government contract and failed ; his licence was taken away, and the " Osteria di Devorio " was necessarily closed. We were charmed with the beauty of the situation, and finding a fixed stone table and bench upon the terrace, we took possession of such unusual luxuries. Our *déjeuner* was handsomely spread, and Couttet was highly commended for some excellent red Vin d'Asti, which he had found at Premia, and now produced for our refreshment.

The old man lingered near, apparently only for the pleasure of our company, for I could scarcely persuade him to accept some of our provisions, and he had previously refused a trifle which H—— had offered him.

Presently he was joined by another man, who, after surveying us with evident curiosity, went round to the back entrance of the house, and disappeared within. We then heard that he was the owner of the property ; and taking the hint thus given, we followed, and gained admittance to the house. The poor man seemed pleased with our admiration of the beautiful site which he had chosen, and showed us with evident pride how substantially all was built, apparently intended for a superior residence as well as an hotel. The large empty rooms

looked very desolate, the only furniture which we saw being dairy utensils, and a quantity of glass and crockery, displayed in a kind of pantry. No doubt, by previous arrangement (provided we could have dispensed with bedsteads, &c.), we might have been very comfortably housed here, and we could only regret that the misfortunes of the master now prevented travellers from benefiting by the enterprising spirit which had prepared such unusual capabilities for their reception in a place so little known.

There is a short way hence to Binnen, straight over the mountain ridge in front. This was doubtless the track explored by Mr. Hinchliff, but it is quite impracticable for horses. The path which we had to follow makes a long *détour* to the right, and although used for horses it is little traversed except by the country people, either for smuggling, or for conveying their cheeses down into the valleys.

As soon as our men could be roused from their siesta we again set forth, leaving the villagers busily employed carrying out dressing for the meadows in panniers slung across their mules. We turned near a wooden bridge, and passed over pine-covered hills, separated by verdant basins, until we reached a pretty lake, where the valley opened wider, enclosed at the further end by the Albrun Pass and

the heights of Monte Rossa. The path crept close along the rocky margin, sometimes obliging us to splash through the water. We had then to cross a marshy plain, where we were frequently impeded by deep watercourses, which the horses had difficulty in avoiding, for the ground was treacherous and the footing insecure.

The old man's voluntary guidance was really useful, and we were very glad that he had continued to favour us with his company. His home was at some chalets which we passed soon after on the pastures, where his family lived, busily occupied in making the cheeses for which these upland valleys are famous. We exchanged very kindly farewells, and soon felt his loss, for all signs of a track here disappeared, and we became entangled amidst streams and rocks. The men were fairly puzzled, but they would not own their ignorance, and the horses were made to scramble on over extraordinary places—requiring us to jump off and on constantly. At last the steep mountain side was before us, with the certainty of a two hours' climb ere the summit of the pass could be attained. C—— and I continued to ride until about half way, enjoying the new and glorious views as we ascended—the columnar and remarkable forms assumed by some of the rocky crags

to the left being most peculiar, apparently indicating basaltic formation; while the lake and wooded knolls below formed a beautiful foreground. Then the way became so very rough and steep that we dismounted, and finished the rest of the rocky scramble on foot. The intense heat of the summer had much reduced the snow fields this season. Here the snow extended for a very short distance on either side the summit, and we preferred climbing rather above, over the rocks, to getting our feet wet by passing through it. Now we re-crossed the Swiss frontier, and were welcomed by a fine sight of the monarchs of the Oberland, who again stood with their hoary heads uncovered before us. The whole scene was very wild and beautiful as we rested on the highest point, with the men and horses scattered upon the rocks below us.

The descent is steep, but not nearly so rough as on the Italian side. After an hour's walk we were able to use the horses occasionally, until an impetuous torrent had to be crossed on a very frail bridge, formed of a single plank. The animals were driven through the swollen stream at some risk, but all emerged safely, and we hastened downwards over rough pastures, with grand mountain views on all sides, particularly to the left. Behind us were

some rugged peaks, and fine glaciers, in the direction of the Gries. The path occasionally traversed thick woods, and was evidently little used by travellers like ourselves, for it was overhung by branches, and C—— ran imminent risk of sharing Absalom's fate in going through some alders. We thus reached Binnen—a village very picturesquely placed, just where the valley begins to narrow. The river runs below, with the village of Imfeld lower down on the opposite side, forming a pretty object, with a fine background of mountains and snowy peaks. The men wanted a long rest here, but we knew no time must be lost if we meant to reach Viesch before dark. We therefore allowed them only half-an-hour, while we sat down on the shady side of the village street, and refreshed ourselves with some goat's milk;—the outward appearance of the inn not raising any expectation of comfort within. They then tried to discourage us from proceeding onwards, by overstating the time required for the further journey; but we gained truer information from the villagers who gathered round us, and were thus able to assure the men that it *could* and *must* be accomplished in three hours. Meantime, the good folks were evidently much surprised at their unusual visitors, and not a little amused at our efforts

at conversation with them. One old woman became very sociable with me — nodded and smiled most good-naturedly, and concluded by saying we were “*sehr freundliches volk.*” We took leave, with mutual good wishes, about five o’clock. Soon after leaving the village, the valley contracted and became a narrow gorge, between enormous wall-like mountains. The pathway crept, like a winding thread, along the face of the precipices, hanging high above the torrent, which, deep below, forced its noisy way through the narrow rocky channel, and occupied the whole width of the ravine. We began to feel it neither safe nor pleasant to remain on horseback when the path became such a narrow ledge that our knees projected over the precipice as we turned queer corners, where it was occasionally rough as well as steep. It was not easy to find space to dismount, but Couttet released us as soon as possible, and we walked on through the magnificent larch woods, which add so much to the grandeur and beauty of the mountain sides. Trees of enormous girth spring from the rocks, with no apparent root-hold to enable them to withstand the winter storms, whose power was evidenced where,

“Rocking on the cliff, was left
The dark pine, blasted, bare, and cleft.”

The shadows of evening contributed to the striking character of the scenery, making the depth of the gorge dark and gloomy; while the lovely hues of sunset lighted up the mountain summits, and especially fixed our attention upon one presenting the appearance of a huge castellated building. This mountain forms a most conspicuous object among the range between the Albrun Pass, and the Monte Leone. We walked rapidly on, and as we approached Aernen, a village high on the mountain side, we could see Viesch, far below, in the valley of the Rhone. The last descent was through a wood, where the closing day made it rather difficult to avoid stumbling along the rough pathway. At last the valley was open before us, and the men proposed to leave the beaten track, and take, what they called, a footpath over the meadows. We indulged them this time, and all followed in a rapid scamper down the steep and slippery *gazon*; not without some tumbles by the way.

It was almost dark when we mounted again at the bottom, and were led through underwood over rough ground, to the banks of the river, where a wooden bridge enabled us to cross. Thus we joined the car road below Viesch, and ended a journey of fifteen hours by a merry trot, with the lights of

the village as our guides in front. We found our former opinion of the inn quite justified by our present welcome ; and after a long, but most delightful day, we were quite prepared to appreciate the luxury of really comfortable beds.

The grandeur and beauty of the Binnen Thal deserve to be better known, for it would well repay a day's excursion from Viesch, although Murray's brief notice would not induce any one to explore it.

We retained our horses the next morning to carry us up to the hotel on the Æggishorn, which was to be our resting-place for the next two days. It is patronised by the Alpine Club, and we heard that a large English party were assembled there. Fortunately for us, a family had just left, and as we arrived early rooms were vacant. Later in the day there seemed to be great difficulty in providing accommodation, and "*beaucoup de monde*" was pleaded as an excuse for a very limited supply of furniture in our bed-rooms.

The Æggishorn and its beautiful panorama have been so fully appreciated, and well described, in "A Lady's Tour," that I shall gather together only a few of the impressions left by our sojourn at Willig's Hotel. One great attraction to ordinary travellers is the facility of access from Viesch. Many who are not disposed to encounter the fatigues and

occasional inconveniences of the higher passes, here find themselves surrounded by the grandest glacier and mountain scenery, while enjoying the comforts of a good inn, and within two hours' ride or walk of an excellent car road, which will soon be extended up the valley to Obergesteln.

The way to the summit of the Horn is year by year improved, and doubtless the enterprising spirit which Willig has already shown, will lead him, in due time, to make the surrounding beauties more easily accessible. A safer and more convenient, although probably less amusing, footpath might usefully be substituted for the somewhat insecure sods bordering the water course, which we followed to the Viesch glacier.

The lovely little Märjelen See, enclosed at one end by the ice cliffs of the Aletsch glacier, with its deep blue water and miniature icebergs, so brilliantly pure and transparent, floating on its surface, might be deemed a scene in fairy land, in itself well worth a visit to the Æggishorn. A walk thither by the water-course, and back to the hotel, over the intervening hills, employed the afternoon of our arrival. A large and agreeable party assembled at dinner, and the evening was pleasantly spent, notwithstanding the smoke from the wood fire, which

preferred going any where but up the chimney. Recent numbers of the "Times," and the last "Quarterly Review" lying on the table, or rather the stove, evidenced the interest taken in the host's well-doing by one of his English friends, by whom he was thus kindly supplied. We gladly welcomed such news from the home world, after a fortnight spent in the mountains,—without even a "Galignani" to enlighten us on passing events.

Saturday morning was again fine, and we were early out to climb the Horn. During the first part of our walk we were interested in tracing our route through the mountains from Premia; and recognised the remarkable castellated summit, which might be supposed to have been the abode of a race of the giants of olden time. The horizon was very clear on that side. The Bortelhorn and Monte Leone glittered in sunshine. Beyond them the snowy outlines of the Mischabel and Dom rose above the valley of Saas, partly concealing the more distant summits of Monte Rosa. The noble Weisshorn to the right, with the Matterhorn rising majestically in the centre, were greeted with the delight with which old friends are recognised.

Brouillard swept over the Oberland just as we reached the summit, and for a time we feared the

day was going to disappoint us; —but blue sky was always more or less visible, and after patiently waiting upwards of two hours, during which our hopes were sustained by occasional gleams of sunshine, we were rewarded by an unclouded sight of the whole range, clear and brilliant against the sky.

The peculiar wonder and attraction of this view is, I think, the enormous extent and grandeur of the Aletsch glacier, which sweeps down from the Jungfrau, receiving several tributaries in its course, which extends between twenty and thirty miles towards the valley of the Rhone. The Aletsch Horn, which rises prominently in front, is a beautiful feature; but I must own that the giants of the Oberland seemed to me to lose their individuality on this side. The Märjelen See was shining brightly beneath us; the icebergs on its clear water appearing scarcely larger than snowflakes. We wished to descend upon the glacier above the head of the lake, by taking a very direct course down the steep rocky face of the Horn. Couttet surveyed the proposed route (of course there was no path), and as he pronounced it practicable, we commenced our scramble over rough and often loose rocks, occasionally letting ourselves drop carefully from ledge to ledge. After an hour's hard work we reached the bottom, and looked upwards

with some surprise at the apparent difficulties we had overcome. A large company of very handsome sheep were much astonished at such an invasion of their territories, and seemed disposed to dispute our right of passage; — their intentions however were not warlike, although, in a narrow path, the way in which they pressed their companionship upon us might have been inconvenient.

We now climbed over some rough *moraine*, and passed out upon the glacier, which was, to me, the most impressive part of the day's excursion, indeed almost overpowering from its vast extent and wild grandeur. The distant view of the Zermatt mountains was magnificent, and the colouring of the landscape most varied and beautiful. As we advanced, the crevasses became complicated and more extensive, and Couttet evidently had doubts as to our course. We had brought a man with us from the hotel, that we might benefit by his local experience; but the route which he wished to take seemed to involve a much longer circuit than was quite prudent; so acting on Couttet's advice, we decided to make for *land* at a nearer point. This interference with his plans made the man decidedly sulky. When we again got upon the rocks, he led us needlessly over the roughest parts, frequented only by our friends

the sheep ; and we ran some risk, from the insecure footing afforded on narrow ledges, and over blocks of loosely piled rocks.

Once, a large stone gave way, and turned over, falling heavily on my foot, which for the moment felt quite crushed by the weight. When I released it from the stone, I found that, happily, no serious injury had been done, although the bruises consequent upon such a violent squeeze interfered with the pleasure of a three hours' further walk, much of which was steep climbing up and down the mountain side. We came over the brow, just above a desolate looking little tarn, called the Bette See, from whence it is nearly a two hours' walk back to the hotel, where we arrived, feeling rather tired and very hungry,—for it was half-past six o'clock.—Dinner had already commenced, and we found the host looking out for us rather anxiously, as our absence had been longer than he expected. There was no time to think of toilettes; so we joined the large assembled party at once, when our weariness was soon forgotten, in the general interest and amusement of adventures listened to and recorded.

Some travellers had arrived from Zermatt, and confirmed the rumours we had heard from Couttet of the melancholy fate of a Russian gentleman, who

had lost his life by falling into a crevasse on the Findelen glacier. The accounts given of the accident were various, but all seemed to agree that the unhappy man had been rash, and the Zermatt guides quite incompetent to the emergency.

In the evening my foot became so stiff that I could scarcely walk, but Arnica proved, as usual, an unfailing remedy. The next morning the swelling had gone quite down, and after a day's rest I suffered no further inconvenience. I strongly recommend all mountain travellers, liable to the casualties of sprains and bruises, never to be without a small bottle of this most useful companion.

The rest of a quiet Sunday was most enjoyable, and a clerical traveller kindly read our Church service, for the benefit of a large English congregation.

On Monday we recommenced our wanderings by descending to Viesch, and ended our day's journey at Sion in the valley of the Rhone, which was to be our starting-place to cross the Rawyl Pass into the Ober Simmenthal.

CHAP. V.

THE RAWYL PASS AND ANDERLENK.

THE charming description given by Mr. Hinchliff of the scenery around Anderlenk had excited my interest in the Ober Simmenthal. We had already crossed the Gemmi from both sides, and now wished to become acquainted with the less known outlet from the Rhone valley over the Rawyl Pass, of which Mr. H. also gives a favourable account in his "Summer Months among the Alps."

It was so late on the Monday evening when we reached Sion that nothing could be done in furtherance of our mountain journey. The following morning, when, quite rested and refreshed, we left our comfortable rooms, I heard that Couttet's indefatigable zeal in carrying out our wishes had taken him out before daybreak to search for mules, which were so fully employed that it was difficult to secure the number we required. At last three ani-

mals were promised; but considerable delay followed in providing proper saddles and equipments, and it was just seven o'clock before our cortége was ready to start.

My husband and D—— were to share the services of a mule until we arrived at Ayent, a village about five miles distant, where we hoped another might be found to accompany us to the top of the pass. The morning gave promise of heat too great for any one willingly to encounter a long and fatiguing walk; and even thus early the shade of the trees, by which the path was frequently bordered, was very welcome. The view of Sion was most picturesque as we gradually rose above the valley. The mountains on the other side then opened in great beauty, making us long to explore them up to Evolena, where we heard that a new inn had just been built, to attract visitors to diverge from the great highway. Our path was very pleasant, looking down over the extensive vineyards which supply the wine for which Sion is famous. Winding through beautiful woods, we reached Ayent, where, after several fruitless enquiries, Couttet found a young mule fit to carry D——; but the owner possessed no saddle—indeed there was only one in the village, the property of the head man of the commune, with whom a sepa-

rate bargain was necessary—and it was not without a long negotiation that all was arranged satisfactorily. Meantime we were rather impatiently awaiting the result, under the shade of some fine walnut-trees near the church. A large party of villagers were assembled at an auberge close by, with Mons. le Curé apparently doing the honours. He introduced himself, and politely suggested our taking some refreshment, which we declined so early in the day ; but our men were made happy by the present of a bottle of wine.

When the additional mule at last appeared, it was proposed to attach the luncheon-basket behind the saddle, whereupon the ragged owner vehemently remonstrated, declaring that he had bargained to carry a “Monsieur” only. When the cause of the war of words was explained to us, H—— suggested that “Monsieur” was willing to mount the animal, if *his* weight was considered preferable to *le garçon* and a basket! At this view of the case, the old man looked posed, and, amidst a roar of laughter at his expense, yielded the point.

The path afterwards became occasionally rather perplexing, as it mounted upwards through a fine forest, whence the views were most beautiful. At first we doubted D——’s recognition of the Zer-

matt range; but he was right, and the Matterhorn never looked more lovely than it did now, glittering like frosted silver in the cloudless horizon. The view in front was bounded by rugged precipices, and we fancied we must be approaching the rocky table-land, described as extending for some distance on this side towards the summit; but suddenly the path turned downwards, and we saw it winding round a kind of bay in the mountain side, the loose surface of the steep slope affording such an insecure footing that we were glad to dismount and walk.

This unexpected descent brought us into a narrow valley, enclosed by precipitous crags, and showing no outlet. This was the barrier over which we had still to find our way. Two very remarkable cascades burst from holes in the cliffs on either side, and, dashing noisily over the rocks, unite their streams below, and water these high pastures. A cheese chalet stood in the centre of the meadows, with a group of peasants scattered round, busily employed re-settling the cauldron and other dairy appliances, which they had just removed from a still higher station. We chose a wild and lovely nook for our mid-day rest. A large herd of cows were feeding around, and we admiringly watched two large and remarkably handsome white goats, climbing among

the underwood with which the rocky knolls were gracefully clothed.

Our provisions were soon spread, and for nearly an hour we enjoyed our encampment, in full sight of the glorious snowy pinnacles in the far distance. The goats meantime gradually drew near, evidently curious about their visitors. I offered them some salt, in token of friendship, little anticipating the energetic way in which my advances would be received. Both the animals tried to jump upon my lap, bringing their horns into inconvenient proximity to my face; while, to my son's great amusement, they licked my hands, poked their noses into my pockets, and even proceeded to munch the flounce of my dress. One long-beard contrived to pull off an elastic bracelet, which had nearly vanished down his throat before I succeeded in rescuing my beads. Such demonstrations of affection were overpowering, and the scene was quite absurd until D—— attracted their attention to himself, when, after investigating the contents of his pockets, and making a decided attempt upon his watch, the pretty creatures turned their thoughts to the ground, and began to search carefully for any grains of salt which we had scattered during our meal.

We had been delayed so long in the morning that

there was no time to spare if our journey was to be finished before dusk. As soon as Couttet could persuade the men to move, we mounted our mules to ascend the Gemmi-like path, by which the steep rocks were to be surmounted. The views continued magnificently grand, until, after turning a very abrupt corner, where the path was scooped out of the overhanging rock, the mountains behind were shut out, and we found ourselves entering a high dreary plateau, surrounded by glaciers and inaccessible crags of red rock.

In ordinary seasons the snow is often deep here, but this year's heat had left only dirty-looking patches, which added to the wild desolation of the scene.

It was rough scrambling work for the mules, across the slippery rocks and loose shale. We therefore dismissed the man who had been engaged at Ayent, while we pressed forward towards the wooden cross which marks the summit and serves as a landmark to travellers in bad weather, when this pass must be perplexing as well as dreary. Here the scene changed. A beautiful view of the Simmenthal now opened before us, with Anderlenk, like a speck, far distant in the valley. The path led down the black precipitous rocks which form the mountain side, and

although it had evidently been much improved, was still extremely rough and steep in parts. The descent was very grand and beautiful, especially at one point, where the narrow way skirts the edge of the precipice, and passes under an overhanging rock, from which a considerable stream falls, losing itself in spray, like the Staubbach, and offering a natural shower-bath, under which we were obliged to run as quickly as possible to escape a wetting. When we looked upwards from beneath the fall, the water appeared to come straight down from the sky.

It was curious to watch the men and mules winding their way down these apparently pathless rocks, and adding much to their picturesque beauty. We walked on until we reached the head of the Effigenthal, and passed a small inn, which would doubtless afford welcome, although rough, shelter in bad weather. Then, crossing the river, we mounted again, and soon reached a very tolerable car road which continues down the valley. As we descended, we gained finer views of the Wildstrubel and Razli glacier, which bounded us on the right; on the left rose the Wildhorn and the adjacent peaks. The finest part of the Effigenthal is where a very beautiful waterfall fills up the centre of the picture thus framed between the mountains. We turned a little

off the path, to get the full magnificence of the scene, and then went quickly down the valley, where all looked soft and lovely in the gathering shades of evening twilight.

My husband and D—— proposed to walk on in advance, in order to secure our rooms, and get supper prepared in readiness for our arrival. Their intentions were good, although they were not quite satisfactorily carried out,—as we found when we rode up to a large house, bearing no semblance to an hotel, except in the adornment of a large “Couronne” over the deep balcony in front. No one appeared to welcome us, and we hesitated whether to pass on to another inn at the end of the village, until, going round to a side entrance, Couttet discovered the whole household of five persons, engaged in an apparently hopeless endeavour to discover what the two gentlemen wanted; their united intelligence being unable to comprehend the modest request for four beds! The fact was that H——’s knowledge of German was limited to the power of making a few ordinary wants known. He had boldly asked for “Zwei Zimmer, vier Bette,” an apparently unreasonable demand for two persons, which had called forth a flow of interrogatories in reply, of which not one word was comprehensible. We consequently

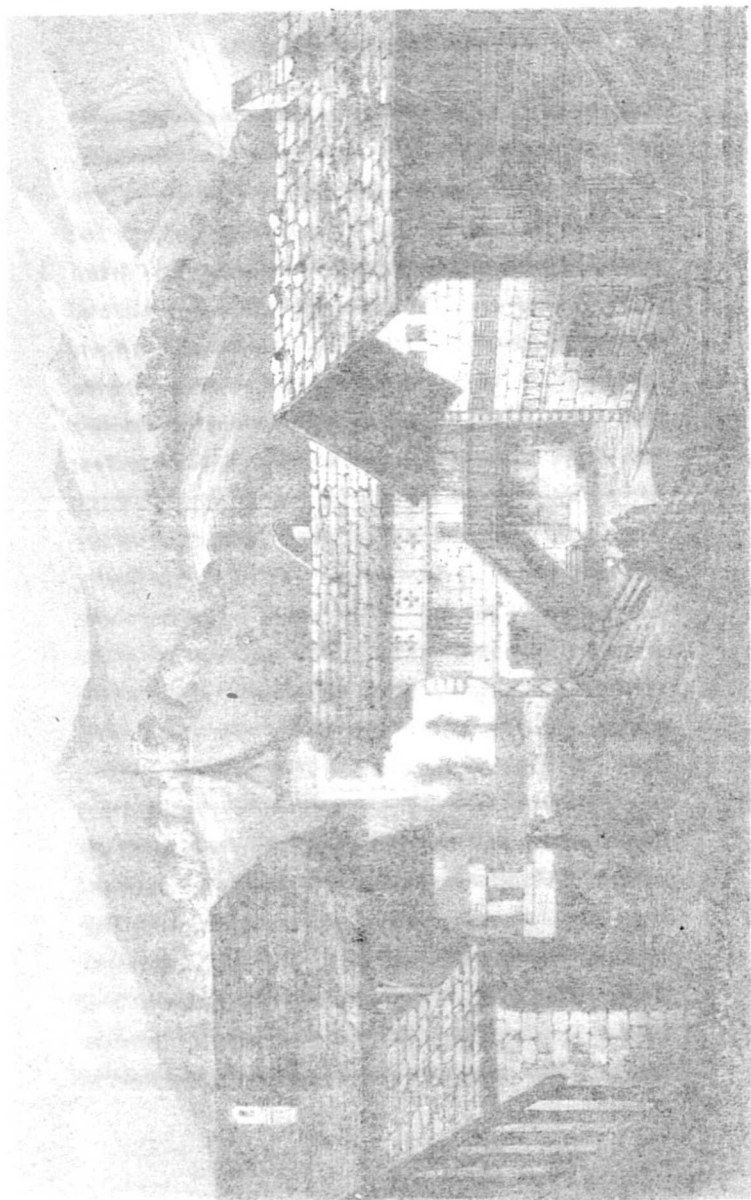
found the whole party involved in a medley of bad German, and still worse French ; the conclusion being that everybody thought everybody else very dull of comprehension.

Our appearance helped to solve the difficulty, and we were soon in possession of nice clean bed-rooms, the one appropriated to the ladies being really comfortably furnished. Our further wants were not so readily supplied. We were late in arriving, and visitors over the Rawyl were evidently so very rare, that means of providing supper for our party caused considerable commotion.

Our appetites were ravenous, but long patience was required before we could be satisfied. D — was sent on several exploratory expeditions to the kitchen, but "*bald, bald*" was all the comfort he received, and the ladies were strongly urged to concentrate all their powers of German conversation in vehement remonstrances ! It was difficult to scold when met with so much good temper and evident anxiety to please, and our patience was at last rewarded by a tolerable supper. The next morning we were so charmed with this quiet and most picturesque place, that we agreed to make a day's rest, and enjoy ourselves. The weather was very warm, so we fully appreciated such an opportunity of in-

dulging in idleness, as we sat in the shade and were refreshed by the cool breezes from the mountains. Anderlenk is a particularly pretty village — each house a picture in itself. Many of them are large and comfortable dwellings, with gardens and balconies full of bright flowers. The people seemed well off, and were much more kindly and unsophisticated in their manners than in more frequented districts, where they have learnt to make a harvest out of English travellers. C—— took out her sketch-book, and sat down on the shady side of the street, where a little circle soon gathered round, much interested in her progress. The children were sociable and intelligent, and seemed pleased to answer our questions about going to school and what they learnt there. The young women and girls are much occupied in embroidery, and told us that their work was principally sent all the way to St. Gall to be sold.

About one o'clock, a carriage drove in from Zweizimmen, and brought an addition to our dinner party. The new arrivals were English, and consisted of a gentleman and three ladies, who had intended to remain for the night, and appeared rather disconcerted at finding us in possession of the best rooms. The difficulties which they made were amusing, especially as we saw nothing to complain of



HATVAGT • 1911

AN DER LENK.

in Teil.

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C.G. del^t

Hanhart lith.

AN DER LENK.



in the dinner, which they pronounced scarcely eatable. Later in the day, we gained a useful hint from their arrangements for an evening's excursion up to the "Sieben Brunnen," as the source of the Simmen is called. We had supposed it necessary to walk all the way, which would certainly have proved hot and wearying; but we heard that their Oberland guide had secured a *charrette* to convey them up the valley. Couttet was immediately sent to seek some conveyance for us; and found that the only one available in the village, was a very small *calèche* intended to hold two persons, besides the driver. However we managed to squeeze D—— into a small compass, while his father shared the driving-board. Leaving Couttet to try to find horses for our journey the following morning, we trusted ourselves to a very merry driver, who amused himself by urging his horse into a full trot, without regard to the roughness of the road or the horse's disposition to kick, which seemed to make the front seat rather a dangerous position. After half an hour's drive we left our carriage at some chalets, close to the lower waterfall, where the noisy Simmen is made useful in working some saw-mills, after it forces its passage through the rocks in a succession of fine cascades, throwing its spray high in the air, and producing

lovely rainbow effects. The woodland scenery through which we passed before we reached the higher pastures was extremely pretty, and varied by several groups of chalets. It is indeed a land of springs and waterfalls, which fall in sparkling beauty on all sides, giving life to the rocky face of the surrounding mountains. The seven fountains, which give a name to this wild and secluded spot, are united in a very pretty cascade, which much contributes to the attractions of the scene. We were shut in by the snows of the Wildstrubel and the adjoining glaciers. Bright spots of green pasture intermingled with the dark rugged rocks around and above us. The foliage was more varied than usual, and all was lighted up with the sunset hues of a most glorious evening, which threw lovely and varying effects of light and shade on the mountains and landscape as we descended to the valley. We returned to Anderlenk quite delighted with our excursion, which had occupied three hours and a half. Any one having time to spare might spend a long summer day most pleasantly in a ramble around the "Sieben Brunnen."

So few lady travellers have hitherto wandered over the green Cols and through the pretty valleys of the Ober Simmenthal, that no arrange-

ments exist for the supply of horses or guides. Consequently Couttet had met with difficulties in his search, the result of his enquiries being the promise of three horses, and one man's saddle, among our party! At last a side-saddle, of very original construction (shaped like a large oval dish, rising a little in front), was kindly lent by a neighbour. Couttet exercised his ingenuity in preparing another seat, and when the morning came, we found a fourth horse and saddle had been secured.

The weather continued most lovely, and although some delay arose in gathering and arranging our cavalcade, we said farewell to our friends at half-past six o'clock.

There was nothing formidable in our day's journey, or in the distance to be accomplished between Anderlenk and the new hotel called "Les Diablerets," at Plain des Isles: but the way was evidently little used. It was rough, and sometimes intricate, and our men were farmers, unaccustomed to a long day's walk, or to act as guides. Judging from appearances, my husband was the best mounted of the party. C—— rode the hero of yesterday evening's drive, while D—— and I were provided with heavy animals, no doubt taken from their ordinary occupation at the plough. After-experience

taught us, that under such circumstances the risk is greater than when danger is more apparent; the only serious accidents encountered during our wanderings, having arisen from mounting horses untrained to their work.

The sun had absorbed the mists of early morning, and all nature looked fresh and sparkling with dewy diamonds, as we crossed the pastures, gradually rising to the smooth rounded swells and wooded knolls over which our way led. We soon saw that the gaunt animal upon which my son was elevated needed watchfulness, for upon broken or moist ground it showed itself incapable of managing its hind legs, and earned the name of Blunderbuss; otherwise all went on well.

As we ascended the Dundergrat (known also as the Trutlisberg), the horizon gradually extended behind us, and point after point of the Bernese Oberland again shone forth above it.

We stopped for a few minutes on a grassy brow, in admiration of this unexpected revelation of beauty, when suddenly my husband's horse startled us by a violent plunge, followed by its throwing itself over impetuously on the ground. We were close to a rough palisade of stakes, such as usually serve for fences here; and my first sensation of horror was that

H—— must fall on the spikes. Mercifully he escaped that danger, and we were most thankful to see him rise without serious injury, although one leg was strained and bruised by having been under the horse. The violence of the concussion had been so great that we could not tell what might be the extent of the mischief, and for some time we were too anxious to observe anything but my husband's increasing paleness, as we descended the other side of the Col. At last he consented to have recourse to the sal-volatile, which, aided by the cold fresh water of a mountain stream, seemed to revive him; and he preferred our going on without entering the prettily situated village of Lauenen, to which we were now close. Our direct course was to the left, where the river had to be crossed at a very rickety bridge, which Couttet declared would give way under our ponderous cart horses; so he insisted on their being sent through the stream, where the passage was effected after great scrambling.

Another green Col was now before us, and the men evidently knew nothing of the way. They led us over enclosed pastures, where we must have been trespassing, for a man came out from the chalets and pursued us with angry gesticulations and remonstrances, to which, however, no heed was paid,

and we found our way up the Chrinen Col, whence the view was magnificent. The Oldenhorn and snow-capped Diablerets formed a continuation of the fine range which, commencing with the Wildstrubel, had been our southern boundary all day. Before us the valley swept downwards, with the village of Gsteig in the far distance.

Couttet went forward to make such arrangements for our rest as an unattractive and notoriously dirty inn might allow. On our arrival we were thankful to find a decent sitting-room, with a kind of couch where H—— could lie down quietly for an hour, while Arnica was applied to the bruised ankle, to which the relief afforded by it was almost magical.

There is a car road from Gsteig down to Saanen, in the Lower Simmenthal. We might, therefore, have altered our plans had the change been desirable for my husband's comfort; but the rest proved so beneficial that he much preferred continuing our course to "Les Diablerets," a further ride of about two hours. It is to be hoped that the inn at Gsteig will be improved, for the situation of the village is particularly pretty: it seems to be the natural sleeping place after crossing the Sannetch Pass, from Sion to Saanen, and it is

also the best starting-point for those who wish to ascend the Oldenhorn. The ride was very pleasant, over the Col de Pillon, through quiet hollows, and woodland scenery. One peculiar looking basin is known as the "Trou d'Enfer," although nothing in its appearance justifies such a designation. After passing the brow, the beautiful and fertile valley, called the "Plain des Isles," opened in front, bounded by wooded slopes, and enclosed by the precipices and glaciers of the rugged Diablerets. The new hotel is in a lovely position, commanding the finest views around, and looked a most delightful resting-place after the mingled anxieties and enjoyment of our day's journey. We had the unexpected pleasure of being welcomed on the threshold with cordial greetings from English friends. Thus all tended, happily, to remove the impressions of past disaster, and the evening was very pleasantly spent in discussing the attractions of the immediate vicinity, and arranging an excursion for the following day.

It was, however, an anxious evening for some of the inmates of the hotel, owing to the prolonged absence of a party which had started very early in the morning to ascend the Oldenhorn. A lady had allowed her two young daughters to join the

expedition, which proved rather too long and fatiguing for ladies to undertake comfortably. When it became quite dark, without any tidings of the travellers, the mother became sadly distressed, and set out to meet them. At half-past ten they all returned quite safe and well, but rather over-done by the length of the excursion.

We had proposed remaining here for two or three days, as our last mountain sojourn. There could be no doubt that a quiet day would be the safest restorative for H—— after his severe shake: so he prudently consented to our making an expedition under Couttet's care, leaving him to explore the valley near at hand. Local guide-books, and general enquiries, led us to decide upon the ascent of the Chamoissaire, a summit about four hours distant from "Les Diablerets," and perfectly easy of access. Good mountain ponies were provided for us; and, anxious to avoid the heat, we were in readiness at five o'clock, when a most lovely morning again greeted us. We rode across the valley, and then turned upwards through the forest, the path skirting a deep ravine, which severed us from the rocky foundations of the Diablerets. After emerging from this miniature pass, we mounted the grassy Col de Croix, and thence again gazed on the

summit of Mont Blanc. As we advanced, the whole range opened gradually in sight, without a cloud to dim its beauty. The direct path leads on past the Pension Villard (mentioned by Mr. Hinchliff), to Bex in the Rhone Valley. Our way to the right wound up and down broken ground and deep gulleys, rather tediously, until the Chamoissaire came in view. Its long grassy slope appeared such an easy walk, that we were disposed to regard it rather contemptuously. The horses were left at some chalets close to a small lake, only three hours instead of four (as we had been told) having been occupied in reaching this point. Although not yet half-past eight o'clock, the sun was already powerful, and we were exposed to its full force as we mounted the steep and slippery grass, which made our walk more fatiguing than it had appeared in prospect. Indeed, for the last twenty minutes we were quite melting from the intense heat and glare, and longed even for the shadow of a great rock, to give us shelter.

We were three-quarters of an hour on foot in reaching the summit, which descends in a steep and perpendicular precipice on the other side, overhanging the deep valley down which the road to Aigle and Villeneuve is carried. We had no anticipation

of such a magnificent and lovely view as that by which we were now encircled. Once again the Oberland peaks rose in the distance, the morning light giving their summits a pale unearthly golden hue. The nearer range, which had skirted our route for the last few days, then intervened, with the Oldenhorn and Diablerets conspicuous in the foreground. The chain was severed by the deep valley of the Rhone, beyond which, in the far distance, the Weisshorn again appeared, glittering in the sunshine, and closing the farthest vista. Dark mountains, grouped together on the horizon, extended to the Combin, and Mont Velan over the St. Bernard Pass; thence onward, until Mont Blanc was seen, guarded by its wondrous Aiguilles, displaying its massive grandeur in pure unsullied brilliancy, and resting against an atmosphere of deep unclouded blue, without haze or vapour to dim its outline.

Couttet was delighted that my friend should thus receive favourable impressions of what *he* naturally thinks the finest scenery in Switzerland; and he assured "Mademoiselle" that this was the marked day of her tour, for she gazed for the first time on Mont Blanc.

Comparatively close to us, on the other side of the valley, was the snow-crowned Buet, while the Dent

de Midi (de Bex) looked rugged and wild, with scarcely a trace of snow upon its sharp rocky pinnacles, backed by the dark mountains of Savoy. Beneath, the lake of Geneva extended like an inland sea; the sunshine, at first, scarcely penetrating the vapour which rested on its surface, until it became gradually absorbed, and all was clear to the line of the distant Jura.

When the exertion of walking was over, the heat was no longer oppressive, and we spent upwards of two hours enjoying the beautiful panorama. Couttet produced a fowl and some wine from his knapsack; and as it was now eleven o'clock, we were quite ready to appreciate his forethought. Then turning downwards, we lingered long on our way, as we took a last farewell of the Oberland summits, which gradually vanished from our sight. We had studied them on all sides, and from every variety of elevation and aspect, until they had become familiar friends, of whom we most reluctantly took a long farewell.

We varied our way back to "Les Diablerets" by taking a shorter, although steeper path, through very pretty scenery, keeping quite on the opposite side of the ridge which we had skirted in the morning. During our ride C—— was amused by hearing part

of a conversation between Couttet and the old man who owned and guided her pony. Some question having arisen as to the difficulties *en route*, the man was curious to know how Couttet managed with the ladies, who, from experience, he seemed to think were troublesome charges! “Ordinairement ceci va mal, et cela va mal! à fin tout va mal,” was his opinion; to which the sententious reply given by our good friend was, “Mais, avec *mes* dames, tout va bien.” Certainly a flattering report at the end of a long journey!

We reached the hotel again at half-past three, and found my husband quite recovered, his morning rest having included a walk up the valley towards the Diablerets.

Our account of the beauty of Mont Blanc seemed to awaken the spirit of locomotion, and we began to think two more days spent here might be dull. Evening disclosed some drawbacks in the locality (the drainage of the house being manifestly imperfect); and at last H—— boldly suggested a grand effort to reach Chamouni the next day. When called into council, Couttet did not venture to say more than, “Je pense que c’est possible;” but his wishes induced him to further the scheme; and after much consideration it was decided at nine P.M. to

start again at five the following morning. My packing preparations were quickly made. By daybreak the charrettes rattled up to convey us to Aigle, and we were *en route* before any one, but a very sleepy looking waiter, appeared to be awake in the hotel.

C—— and I, with Couttet to weight us, occupied one conveyance, with my husband, D——, and the baggage in the other. The road, by courtesy so called, was formed of huge stones and projecting pieces of rock, and I found these two hours the most uncomfortable portion of our whole journey. Every bone was shaken, and my only satisfaction was to see H—— bearing it without suffering;—a convincing proof that he was not the worse for his fall.

Just above Sepey the road suddenly improved, allowing us to enjoy the remainder of our drive, and to admire the beautiful scenery through which we passed, as we wound along the mountain side, with the precipitous face of the Chamoissaire rising conspicuously on the opposite side of the valley.

We descended to Aigle by a succession of steep zigzags, and drove up to the railway station in our carts before nine o'clock, almost smothered with dust. We were in good time for the train to Villeneuve, and found the ease and comfort of the railway

carriage an agreeable contrast to the dislocating process to which we had been subjected during the first part of our cart drive.

Our portmanteau was safe at the *poste*, and after refreshing our wardrobes, it was re-despatched to await us at Geneva. Then we had to get to Bouveret, on the other side of the river, whence a rival line of rail took us on to Martigny. The telegraph had conveyed an order for mules to be in readiness to carry us over the Tête Noire. Thus no time was lost in preparation, and we were quickly mounted for the further variety of a ride to Chamouni.

Storm clouds were gathering when we reached the Col de Trient. All looked wild and threatening, and we hastened down through the village and on to the hotel, in the gorge of the Tête Noire, where the gloom around was quite in unison with its name. A blast met us just as we gained shelter, heralding a furious storm of thunder, lightning, and rain, which made us truly grateful that we had reached such good quarters. Dinner was ordered, as the best way of employing the time, for it was too early to stop, unless we found ourselves permanently weather-bound.

About half-past five, blue sky again appeared, and nothing could be more beautiful than our even-

ing ride through the pass, as the clouds drifted off the mountains, and the stormy sunset displayed wondrous effects of light and shade.

The frontier of Savoy was crossed just as daylight faded. The way then became rough, and as twilight was followed by a very dark evening, the comfort of riding was questionable. When we reached the rough descent to Argentière we dismounted, and were thankful for the aid of a lantern, which Couttet, who had hastened forward, sent out to meet us.

It would perhaps have been prudent to have slept at Argentière, where the house looked clean and comfortable, but we found a cart preparing for the last stage of our journey, which we all wished to finish on Saturday night. We therefore waited only until the baggage was stowed away, and started once more about nine o'clock. Our new conveyance being roomy, had two seats slung across it to accommodate us all, Couttet being in front. He displayed a huge globular lantern, made of calico stretched over a light wooden frame in very primitive fashion, and sheltering a tallow candle, which we looked upon with the greatest respect, and guarded carefully from the gusts of wind which frequently threatened its extinction. The night was now extremely dark, and all that we could see in front was an

unearthly shape, like a pair of huge horns, extending above the horse's head. Fortunately, we could *not* see the road we were travelling, but we could feel that it was very rough, and we could hear the torrent roaring just beneath us, in a very turbulent state after the recent storm, which had expended its full fury around Chamouni. With the knowledge that there was no parapet of any kind for our protection, I own to having felt rather anxious during the last hour and a half; but Couttet assured us that he knew every stone in the road, and we went on carefully, until we reached more level ground, where the river had quite overflowed its banks. Soon the lights of Chamouni gleamed cheerfully before us, and it was with great satisfaction that, after some difficulty about accommodation, we took possession of a charming suite of rooms, and went to bed with the comfortable feeling that to-morrow was Sunday, and we should not breakfast until nine o'clock.

The good folks of Chamouni were in a state of excitement in consequence of the visit of the two young princes of Savoy, the elder of whom they *then* supposed would be, in the ordinary course of events, their future sovereign. Guns were fired and illuminations displayed to do them honour, while all the musical talent of the community was exerted in the

same loyal spirit. We had the honour of dining at the *table d'hôte* with royalty, represented by two remarkably plain youths, whose present high destiny as heirs of the kingdom of Italy would then have been considered a dream little likely to be realised.

We live in times of strange changes, and assuredly the simple-minded people of Chamouni would have been greatly astonished, if, while thus heartily welcoming the sons of Victor Emmanuel, they had been told that the sincerity of their attachment would be tested within a twelvemonth by the visit of a foreign monarch, whose policy had acquired this Alpine territory, and who would come accompanied by his Empress, to claim the transfer of their homage and loyal devotion.

We remained three days at Chamouni, to show our friend some of the finest features of the surrounding scenery, our principal excursion being the ascent of the Brèvent, from whence we had a magnificent view of Mont Blanc in full majesty and beauty.

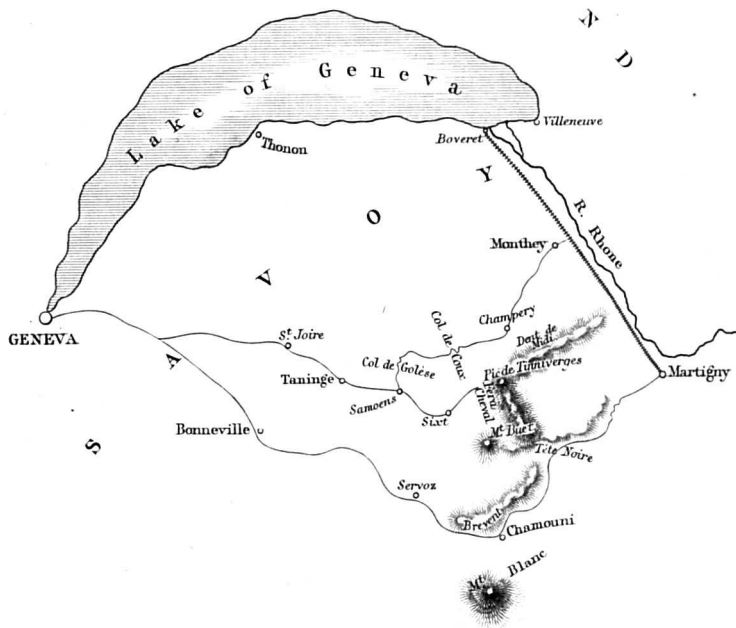
An introduction to the domestic circle of our good friend Couttet forms one of the pleasant reminiscences of this visit. By special invitation we all went to breakfast at his own house, with his wife

and family. Nothing could be more simple and kindly, yet really refined, than the hospitality with which we were welcomed. All the younger branches came in from their various avocations to shake hands and remain for a little chat, during which they showed a lively and intelligent interest in our home life. One of the daughters was evidently very fond of flowers, and seemed quite charmed by my notice of some plants in the window, among which a pretty fuchsia was cherished as a great rarity.

Early the next morning, before our departure, we were presented with very gay bouquets gathered from their own garden, and prettily arranged by the young people. All were assembled to say farewell, and with many friendly good wishes attending our homeward journey, we reluctantly turned away from the mountains.



S W I T Z E R L A N D



CHAP. VI.

THE VALLEYS OF SIXT AND CHAMPERY.

AT the conclusion of our journey last year, we stood upon the summit of the Brevent, and, after gazing upon the unclouded majesty of Mont Blanc, reigning supreme above the well-known scenery of the valley of Chamouni, turned to study the outline of the hitherto unexplored region lying to the north, between our elevated position and the Lake of Geneva. Couttet then pointed out to us the direction of the Pass of the Col d'Anterne, and assured us that there was much of interest and beauty in the neighbourhood of the valley of Sixt, to which it led.

The ideas thus received were brought home as the germ of future enjoyment; and when our hopes of another holiday among the mountains appeared likely to be realised, I wrote to Couttet to name Sixt as our trysting-place on an early day in August 1860. In the meantime attention was

attracted to a region as yet scarcely noticed, by the announcement of "The Eagle's Nest," from the well-known pen of Mr. Wills, whose personal interest in the locality, and peculiar powers of pictorial description, ensured a useful and interesting companion for our intended wanderings. I was anxious to benefit by the information thus promised, and considered myself very fortunate in obtaining an attractive volume only a few hours before we left London.

We were surprised to find our inquiries at the "Couronne," at Geneva, met by complete ignorance of these valleys, although a new and excellent road now renders Samoëns an easy and beautiful excursion from thence.

We engaged a voiturier to take us to Sixt, with the option of sleeping at Samoëns, as we did not leave Geneva until two o'clock. The Bonneville road was quitted at Nangy, where we turned to the left, and passed through a rich and fertile country (part of the "barren slopes" recently acquired by Imperial policy), until we approached the little town of St. Jeoire, most picturesquely situated under the shadow of the Mole, which is seen so conspicuously from Bonneville. Here our driver requested to rest his horses, evidently under the delusion that the remainder of the road would be trying to their

powers. We granted a "petite heure," and spent the time in a stroll above the town, to a curious old chateau, where a lovely view is commanded from the garden terrace. The coachman's "petite heure" extended to a much longer time; and it was past six o'clock before we left St. Jeoire. We soon lost sight of the beautiful valley to the right, but the attractions before us increased. The mists gradually rose from the mountain summits, wild storm-clouds gathered together, and seemed to dissolve in the glowing hues of the molten west;—as the sun went down, bringing out the varied foliage, and bright bits of pasture, in strong relief against the dark crags with which the valley was enclosed.

At Tanninges the road from Bonneville and St. Martin re-unites with the new line we had traversed. The evening now began to close rapidly, and before we reached Samoëns the stars were shining brightly. We here found that our driver knew nothing of the locality, and was taking us quite astray, when he was stopped and directed to the Hotel dela Croix d'Or; a clean and comfortable country inn, which will probably receive the encouragement which it deserves, now that its merits have been made known by Mr. Wills.

Our voiturier here learnt that the road onwards to Sixt was unsuited to any conveyance less solidly

constructed than the springless charrettes of the country. He was therefore glad to be relieved from further responsibility, and we arranged with Mons. Pellet (the landlord), to provide for our further journey. The next morning, daylight and sunshine brought forth the beauty of the valley of Samoëns, surrounded by richly wooded hills. The fine fall of the Nant Dant is seen from the balcony of the inn, and is within ten minutes' walk of the village. Everything however appeared so saturated with the heavy storms of the last few days that we did not venture to encounter the mud, but contented ourselves by walking to the "Place," which is shaded by a magnificent linden-tree, said to be an object of great local pride and affection. Under its shelter a very noisy market was going on, for the supply of all kinds of domestic wants. The articles were spread on the ground, the vendors loudly proclaiming their merits, after the fashion of an auction; while eager purchasers made their biddings, and extended their hands, (containing sundry sous) for a dozen of "hooks and eyes," or a choice selection of needles.

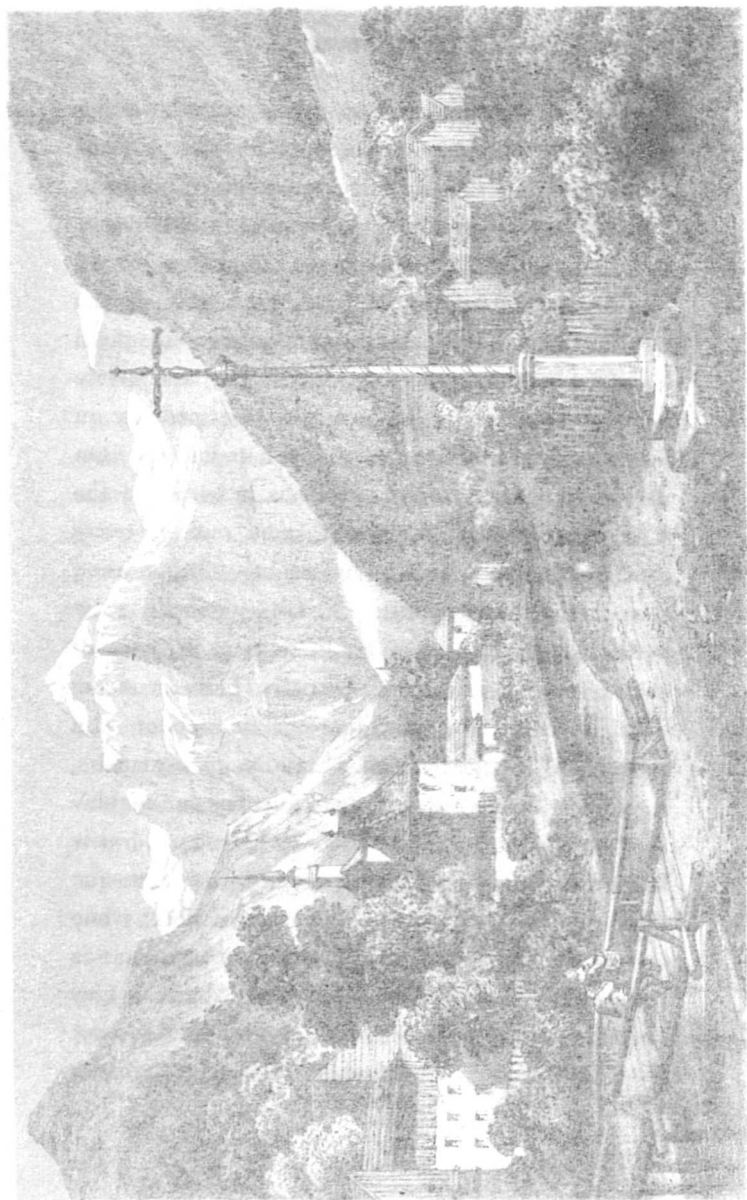
As soon as the cart was ready, and our baggage stowed away, we set out; and passing between rows of fruit-trees, skirted the marshy looking meadows,

where every blade sparkled in the morning sunshine.

Soon the valley narrowed, and the river Giffre, which had hitherto spread itself over a wide stony bed, became contracted, and almost lost itself in a rocky ravine fringed with beech-trees, which quite overhung the precipitous banks through which the stream now forced its noisy way. As the road winds up a short but steep ascent, the scenery is most striking; greatly enhanced by the unusual variety of wood with which the rocky knolls and mountain sides are so richly dressed. High crags of many hues, and lofty summits, rose on every side, intermingled with mossy looking slopes of brightest green. Above all, our eyes again rested with delight on snow and glacier, which have such inexplicable attractions to real lovers of the Alps.

The village of Sixt is quite concealed, until, suddenly turning to the left, another valley opens, closed at the upper end by the fine Pic de Tinneverges. A glittering spire, rising above a group of conventual looking buildings, announced our arrival at the Hotel du Fer à Cheval, where we were welcomed by Madame (now "la veuve") Moccand, who reigns supreme as the owner of the convent inn.

We were surprised not to find Couttet awaiting us, as my appointment had been for the previous evening. We did not doubt his arrival during the day; so after taking possession of very comfortable rooms, and depositing our luggage, we retained the charrette for an excursion to the head of the valley. The drive occupied about an hour and a half, and was very lovely; the snowy head of the Pic de Tinneverges rose grandly in front, towering above its rocky foundations. On nearer approach the summit itself is lost, and the wild crags which support it stand out in strong relief, assuming a variety of strange forms when seen from different points. The best general view perhaps is gained from a knoll, marked by a small chapel, or "station," substantially built in stone, with an inscription recording the destruction of a village, and the loss of many lives by an avalanche, in 1602. To the right, a vast semicircular amphitheatre of rocks, which from its peculiar form is known as the "Fer à Cheval," encloses a picturesque foreground of green slopes and wooded hills; while the savage character of the surrounding precipices is softened by silvery streams, flowing from the glaciers which crown the heights above. To the left the valley, called the Fond de la Combe, narrows



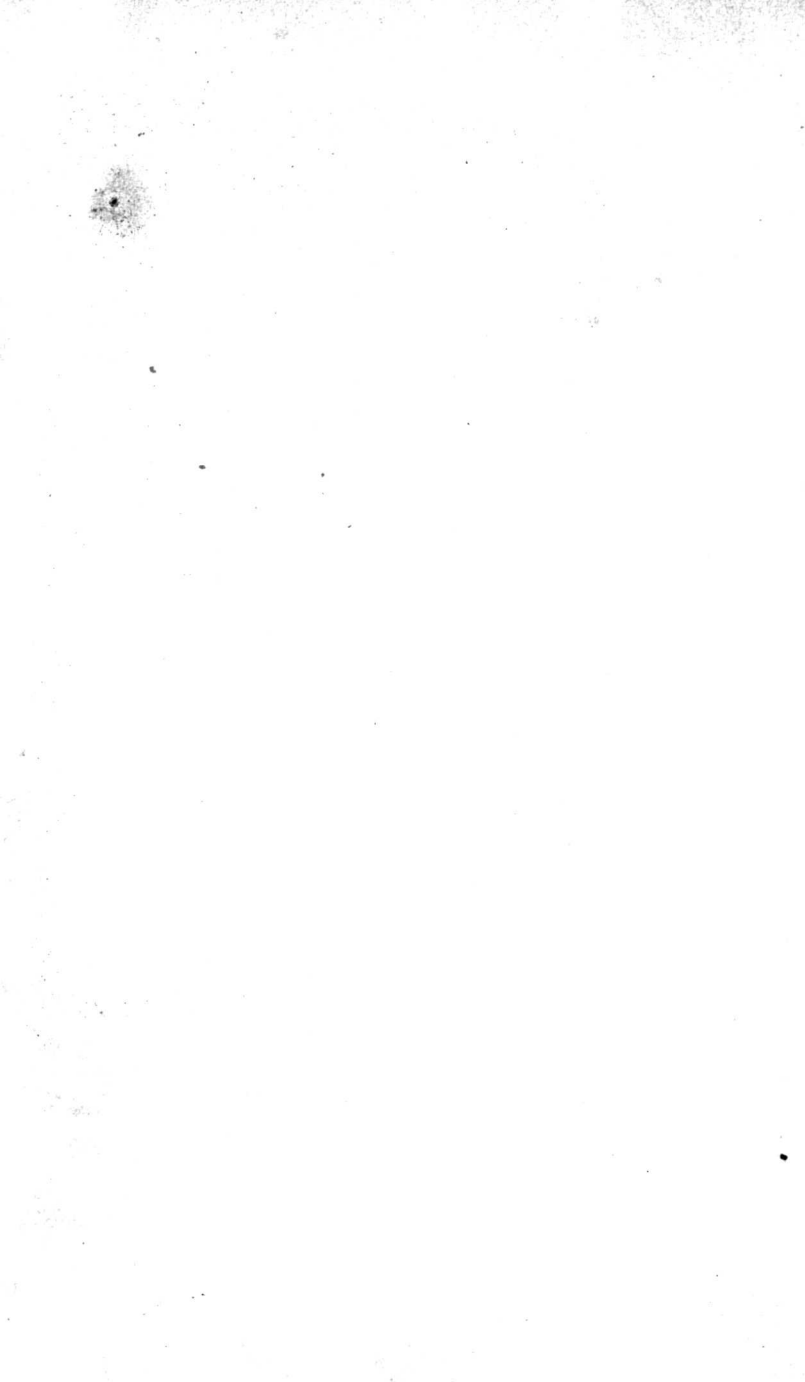
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C. G. del.

Hanhart, lith.

SIXT AND THE PIC DE TINNEVERGES.



as it ascends to the base of Mont Rouan and its glaciers. On this side, the difficult and little frequented pass of the Col de Sageroux (erroneously called the Col de Golèse in Leuthold's map) leads to Champéry, and the Val d'Illiers.

Our cart managed to rumble on for another half hour, over broken ground covered with underwood, and through some very rough water courses. We then left it to await our return; and after crossing the stream, walked for some distance up the valley, enjoying the wild beauty of the scene, and admiring the numerous large and gay butterflies, which seemed strangely out of place. The form of the Pic de Tinneverges is very different on this side, from its aspect when approached from Sixt. It rests on huge buttresses of apparently inaccessible, richly coloured rocks, surmounted by narrow ledges of emerald pasture, which seemed to indicate that even there the foot of man found a resting-place, tempted

“For scanty food the treacherous cliffs to dare,”

and to encounter perils but inadequately repaid by the uncertain crop sought in such dangerous localities. Such perils, and the mode of gathering the grass thus obtained, are well described in the lines of Wordsworth —

“Up the midway cliff he creeps,
To where a scanty knot of verdure peeps ;
Then down the cliff a pile of grass he throws,
The fodder of his herd in winter snows.”

The overhanging precipices, which rose on the opposite side of the Fond, were literally fringed with waterfalls; some glittering in the sunshine like webs of silver tissue, others forming graceful “Staubbachs,” in their descent; but re-uniting ere they reached the rocks below in such tempting shower baths, that we recommended my husband and D—— to remain, and enjoy the refreshment thus offered to them! The whole valley of Sixt is rich in cascades, which, after a season of so much storm and wet, were now in great force. We had passed one fall of great height and picturesque beauty during our drive, besides several others, which would elsewhere attract many visitors. On our return we found the cart was ready on a pretty slope, where the horse had been browsing contentedly during our absence; and after again stopping for a few minutes at the “station,” to renew our impressions of the magnificent grandeur of the “Fer à Cheval,” we turned with regret from the beautiful scenery, which far surpassed our expectations.

The drive back to Sixt was delightful, notwithstanding the abundant exercise afforded by our

primitive conveyance. After doing justice to the culinary efforts of Madame Moccand, and her hand-maiden Marie, we were all ready for an evening stroll in the opposite direction, where the Pointe de Salles, a majestic rocky mountain of peculiar character, rises conspicuously above its neighbours. In about half an hour we reached the dirty village of Salvani, on the hill side; and then crossed a desolate stony track, which tells of the destructive force of the winter torrent. From hence a path ascends to the Plateau des Fonds, and the "Eagle's Nest;" it also leads to the Buet, which, although invisible here, is the real monarch of the valley of Sixt. We saw figures rapidly descending; and after waiting for their approach, we found they were two Englishmen, who had just crossed the Buet, having left Chamouni very early in the morning, accompanied by Zachary Cachat, the well-known guide.

The aspect of the Pointe de Salles, as here seen, rising in precipitous grandeur from its base, is very fine; and the remarkable curves assumed by the strata of the rocks, so perfectly described by Mr. Wills, cannot fail to attract the attention of the most unlearned in geology.

The pass by the Col d'Anterne to Servoz lies

above these precipitous crags, and crosses a narrow ridge, which looks quite inaccessible.

We were to follow this path to the Col as far as the falls of Rouget. So, turning downwards to the right, we crossed the brawling stream of the Haut Giffre, by a very picturesque bridge, and had a scramble up through the pine forest, where every turn opened out new scenes of beauty.

We came out almost *en face* of the upper fall, where the roaring torrent rushed foaming and chafing over the rocks, throwing far and near a thick shower of spray, sufficient to give a complete drenching to those who ventured to cross the rough bridge in front. Neither C—— nor I were disposed to cool our admiration by such a process, and we were satisfied to remain at a respectful distance. Evening was closing fast as we walked homewards. There was just sufficient vapour in the air to catch the rosy tints of a brilliant sunset, and soften the outline of the tall crags with its light floating drapery. Towards Samoëns, the valley looked rich and glowing “with purple and with amethyst,” as the sun disappeared behind the western mountains, leaving an atmosphere of gorgeous beauty; while before us the village of Sixt reposed in shadow. In the far distance the snow-capped Pic de Tinneverges

caught the warm reflection of the sun's last parting rays, contrasting strongly with the cold grey colouring of the dark rocks below.

It was indeed a glorious evening, and we quite appreciated the enthusiastic admiration with which Mr. Wills has so vividly described the charms of this varied scenery.

Thursday morning came, but still no news of our good friend. We began to be perplexed and uneasy, fearing some mischance had arisen, for we knew that he had received the letter which made the definite appointment here. We consulted with Cachat as to any probable cause for the delay, but he could only tell us that Couttet was at Chamouni on Sunday last, and had left on Monday morning.

Fortunately, we had always purposed spending another day at Sixt, to be devoted to seeing Les Fonds, and the "Eagle's Nest;" so we decided to wait until the evening before we made further arrangements, and to start at once on a long ramble, with young Moccand as our guide.

We were all prepared to walk, but during breakfast the youth came to offer us a horse, with a lady's saddle. I remembered that Mr. Wills mentions his wife as usually accompanying him on

his mountain excursions, with the aid of a horse belonging to the hotel. We were thus induced, without sufficient enquiry, to trust to the assurances which we received that the animal was accustomed to such employment, and, with the prospect of a warm day, it was agreed that the occasional relief of riding might be pleasant.

Meantime a discussion was going on between the two Englishmen and a local guide, who refused to conduct them alone over the Col de Sageroux.

There is a tariff at Sixt, a copy of which hung in the salon. By the rules there laid down, one guide was in ordinary seasons considered competent to take charge of two travellers over the pass. But, as it had not hitherto been crossed during this summer, the men considered it very doubtful whether, owing to recent heavy snow, it would be found practicable. It would assuredly be dangerous; and very properly *one* man would not undertake the responsibility.

It would be well if, under such circumstances, Englishmen would defer to the opinion of those competent to judge, without feeling their own courage impugned, or calling in question the character of the men, who are thus thoughtlessly urged to risk their own lives and incur a heavy responsibility without any adequate motive.

In this instance the travellers were determined to persevere, and ultimately Cachat (whose engagement had ended here) consented to remain and accompany them alone. We left the party preparing to start—rather late in the day for such a journey.

Young Moccand was in the yard below getting the horse ready. Neither D—— nor I quite liked the appearance of the animal, or the way in which the youth handled it; but of course we never dreamed but that it belonged to the inn, and that its owner knew what he was about. So, being unwilling to make difficulties, I unfortunately mounted.

Young Moccand did not appear at ease, and I must own to early misgivings about my steed, for, as we proceeded, I gathered that it was only three years old. However, all went on quietly, and I was rather in advance of the others when we reached Salvani, where my son came up to my side. I intended to dismount at the end of the village, to allow my friend the opportunity of riding, when suddenly the horse made a leap into the air, followed by furious plunging and kicking. The first unexpected evolution unseated me in an instant, and I felt myself hanging suspended from the high pommel, swaying to and fro, as the beast continued to kick. At last

my dress gave way, and I was left on the ground clear of the horse, but not out of danger from its heels, which I seemed to feel almost touch my face, as I realised my fearful position, and heard poor D——'s screams of horror. Almost helpless with fear, young Moccand at last dragged away the animal, fully expecting to find me half killed; but I was able to rise unaided from the ground, deeply grateful for such apparently miraculous preservation from all serious injury, and anxious only to assure my companions of my safety. Happily my husband and C—— did not witness the accident, but I must have presented a woeful spectacle when, in a few minutes, they came up and found me with my dress hanging in rags and tatters. All such calamities however, were trivial; and my watch, which would have been a serious loss, was fortunately picked up among some wood shavings on the ground, having been torn away from the chain which fastened it round my neck. There could be no doubt of the necessity of my return to Sixt, if only to see what repair was possible to my torn garments. In this the gentlemen could not assist; so when assured that I was not really hurt, my husband and D—— agreed to our suggestion that they should pursue their walk to Les Fonds, while C—— and I walked back

together. We retraced our steps through the village, amidst the anxious enquiries of the good folks, who had gathered together at the report of my accident, and seemed much concerned at "Madame's" misfortune. One old dame was especially eager in her proffers of service; she produced a small bottle from the depths of her pocket, and assured me I should be much benefited by imbibing the contents forthwith; but, ignorant of the nature of her specific, I thought it safest to decline her kindness with many thanks.

Young Moccand preceded us, leading the cause of the mischief. For some time he could only ejaculate, "Oh! que j'avais peur;" to which his countenance bore witness. As his senses returned, we learnt, to our great indignation, that the horse was hired for the occasion, and that he had never conducted it previously. Indeed, just before we reached the bridge at Sixt, the real owner came out of her cottage, in evident dismay at our return, less on my account than from anxiety to assure us that the animal was "très bon," and accustomed to carry ladies, or as she said, "tout le monde;" an assurance we took the liberty of doubting. My reappearance at the hotel in such woeful plight called forth much commiseration from Madame Moccand, whom, how-

ever, I cannot exonerate from blame, in the deception from which I had suffered. The good Marie's sympathy was shown by every kindly attention in her power, and she would gladly have given us active aid with her needle had it been required. It was a relief to find the repairs of my dress less formidable than appearances led me to expect : a strong gingham skirt having given way only in the seams. Great progress was made in two hours towards its restoration to a wearable condition. I released C——, to enable her to get a sketch of the old convent, and by the time the gentlemen rejoined us my work was completed. I then began to realise the shake and strain I had received, and felt it was prudent to lie down quietly for the rest of the afternoon, while D—— gave me an account of their visit to Mr. Wills's alpine residence, which is approaching completion, although not ready for occupation this season. The situation appeared to be very beautiful, and I could only regret that my accident had prevented C—— from sharing the pleasure of the expedition. Its interest had been increased by the companionship of a young lad, who had joined H—— and D—— after we parted at Salvani, as their guide. He proved an intelligent boy ;—the son of a peasant of the valley, he was receiving his

education at a college at Tanninges, and when he was told that my son was at one of our English colleges, he catechised him learnedly as to his classical knowledge, both in Latin and Greek. A pleasant dinner on the mountain side, and a small present to buy books, no doubt left a very agreeable remembrance of his walk with the English travellers.

The simple kindly manner of the people here is a striking contrast to the extortionate begging almost universal on more frequented routes. At a considerable distance beyond Salvani, my husband and D—— had met a young woman carrying a basket of fruit, who offered them some bilberries, which they declined, saying that they liked strawberries better. On hearing this, her basket was immediately opened to produce some fine mountain fruit, to which ample justice was done; but, much to their surprise, the young woman was quite unwilling to receive any payment; and H—— had to urge her acceptance of it, as a trifling token of good will.

They had repassed the scene of my accident on their return, and looking at some trunks of newly felled trees, piled by the side of the path, H—— was horrified to see the bark chipped off by the horse's heels immediately above the spot where I had

lain on the ground. Later in the afternoon C—— joined them in a walk to the other side of the Haut Giffre, where a fine cascade is formed by the stream which rushes through a deep gulley from the mountain above; the vegetation around being every where most rich and luxuriant. This path was the commencement of the ascent of the Dioza, another striking point above the valley, beyond which a long day's excursion may be made up to the Lake de Ger.

The party had returned only a few minutes, when D—— rushed in with the welcome news of Couttet's appearance in the kitchen. A joyful greeting in my room soon followed this announcement, and our eager enquiries as to the cause of his delay were answered by rather an amusing account of his having misread my letter. I had fixed our meeting "*à Sixt, Mardi, Août 7me.*" This he had curiously transformed into "*St. Martin, Août 7me;*" probably with an impression that we should drive up there from Geneva, and cross the Col d'Anterne from Servoz to Sixt! Full of eagerness to welcome us, he had walked down to St. Martin on Monday, and waited there until Thursday morning. The poor man forcibly described his feelings of perplexity and despair, when, retracing his steps to Chamouni, he met Balmat at Les Ouches, and

related his troubles. On seeing my letter, Balmat naturally read it aright, and sent his friend to Sixt over the nearest Pass, rejoicing in the solution of his difficulties, but full of anxiety as to the course we might have taken in his absence. As he neared the valley his enquiries soon enabled him to identify our party as still in the neighbourhood, and he had just arrived when D—— found him in the kitchen.

Poor Couttet looked really wearied and careworn, but he was quite happy at our re-union, and we felt equal satisfaction in again placing ourselves under his careful guidance.

We found the culinary department of the hotel in the unsatisfactory state described in "The Eagle's Nest," and we took advantage of Mr. Wills's suggestion, to order a dish of "œufs à la neige" for dinner. It was produced in perfection, and quite justified its reputation. The resources of the cuisine evidently were not great, although all Madame's energies seemed devoted to that department, while the general service of the house was entirely dependent upon Marie's unwearied exertions. Our rooms were really comfortable; and the capabilities of the old convent are so great, with its wide stone passages and ample space, that

no doubt continued efforts will be made to increase the accommodation which its extending reputation will render necessary.

During our dinner the two Englishmen came back from the Col de Sageroux with Cachat, having realised the truth of the warning which they had received. They were repaid for their walk by a glorious view from the summit of the Pass, which they reached without much difficulty, and commenced the descent on the other side, down a very steep glacier slope. There Cachat paused, and considering that the recently fallen snow made the danger of its sliding down under their weight too great to justify their proceeding, he refused to accompany them further. The travellers had evidently been annoyed, but Cachat was firm; and unquestionably he was perfectly right. From after conversation, we felt assured that he had accompanied them in order to prevent the risk of any rash enterprise on their part. His personal intrepidity was above question, and, confident in his own reputation, Cachat felt he could exercise wholesome control, especially as the young men had previously experienced his coolness and self-possession under circumstances of decided peril on the Col de Géant, where they had encountered bad weather and thick fog, when solely dependent

upon his guidance. Of course they had no alternative but to return to Sixt, and follow the road down to Samoëns.

During the evening heavy rain set in, which continued the next morning, and obliged us to delay starting until eight o'clock, when the clouds began to break, and we mounted the charrette (for which Couttet had sent to Samoëns) with cordial *adieux* to Madame and Marie, and many good wishes for the continued prosperity, and improvement, of the Convent Hotel. There was no rain during our drive, but it began again just as we reached Samoëns, and all prospect of going on over the Cols to Champéry was necessarily given up. We were fortunate in having such comfortable quarters at the "Croix d'Or," and to me the day's enforced rest was probably essentially beneficial, for I was very stiff, and had felt the shaking of the charrette uncomfortably; — to others, however, it was rather depressing to listen to the ceaseless pour, which lasted for the rest of the day.

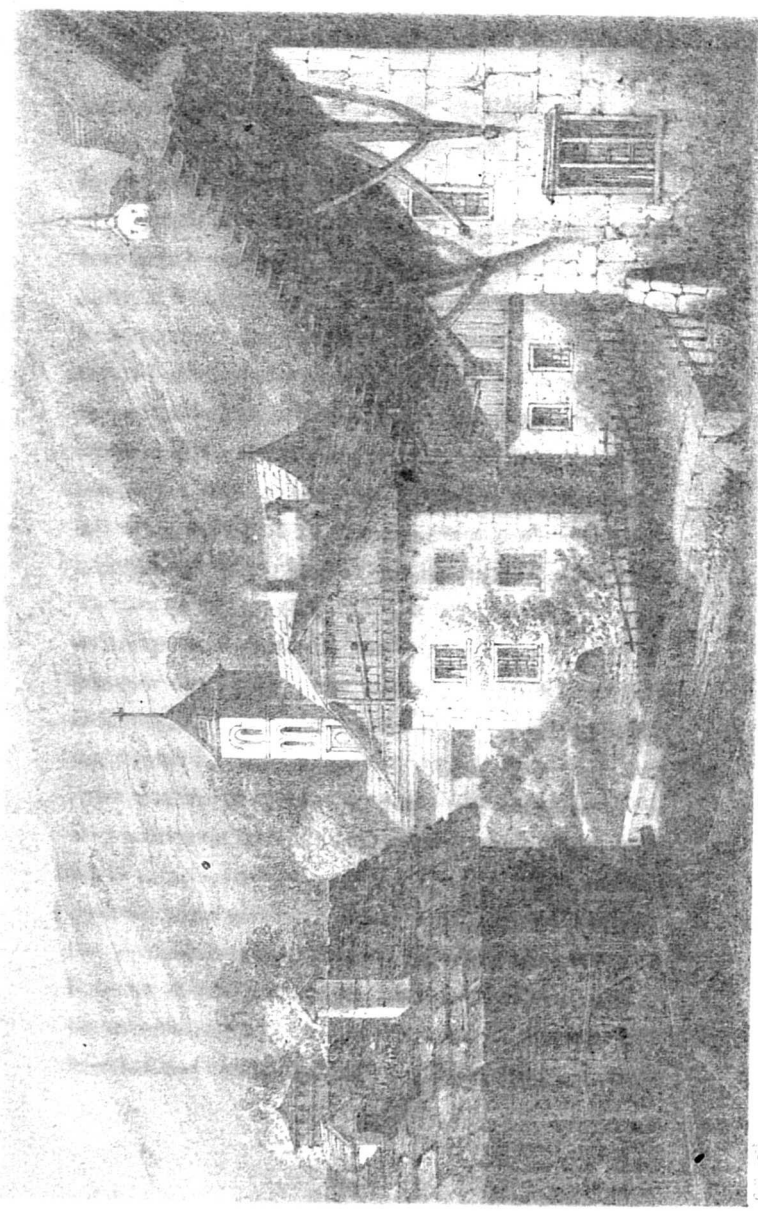
Monsieur Pellet's son had been to Paris, and seen the world. He consequently thought it part of his duty to enliven us during his attendance by giving his opinions on politics, and the general aspect of affairs. Unfortunately his Savoyard French

made it difficult to follow the thread of his discourse.

The volunteer movement in England was one of the subjects which he brought forward, and to our great amusement we found him fully persuaded that the ladies actively shared in the military ardour. On our questioning his authority, the young man left the room, and returned with a copy of a French "Illustrated News," in which he triumphantly displayed a striking picture of "Les Riflewomen Anglaises" in suitable bloomer costume. Nothing that we said could shake his faith in the fact; for the picture was described as from a photograph, taken from life!

Towards evening the rain lessened, and on Saturday morning the sky had cleared. Light vapours were rising above the valleys, and there seemed every prospect of a favourable day for our ride across the mountains. We started at seven o'clock with four mules and a baggage horse. Our party was further strengthened by Cachat, who joined us, apparently, only for the pleasure of a walk through a country with which he was unacquainted.

The path led up a lateral valley, richly wooded and enclosed by lofty rocks. Sometimes we skirted a deep ravine, passing beneath fine beech-trees.



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C.G. del.

Hanhart, lith.

SAMOENS.



Then the valley opened more widely, and a small village appeared, nestled amidst pastures, over which the peasants were scattered, busily taking advantage of the sunshine to cut their hay. On reaching the top of the Col de Golèse, the view, looking back towards Samoëns, was very beautiful. In front a short descent led into another valley, whence a way on the left leads down to Thonon, the newly acquired French port on the Lake of Geneva. The heavy rain of the previous day had washed away the path in some places, and left it slippery every where. The baggage horse was also very clumsy in descending, and managed to slip up in a kind of gully. Once prostrate, nothing could induce the poor animal to attempt to rise, until after freeing it from its burden the men placed it on its legs by main force, using our batons as levers.

Fortunately no harm was done; and leaving Couttet to re-arrange the baggage, C—— and I walked on, thinking we should overtake my husband and D——, who were in advance with Cachat. We failed, however, to discover them, and when we reached some wooded ground, where several paths diverged, we prudently waited until rejoined by the men and mules. They took an upper path to the right, and we wound round the hill side, over very rough

ground, with the Col de Coux in front of us. Still we could see nothing of the gentlemen, until, by mounting a rocky knoll, we caught sight of them far beneath us, toiling up the stony course of a stream, which finds its way down from the Col. They had made an unnecessary circuit, but the men said it would have been an easier course for the mules, than that which we had followed.

We re-united on a beautiful slope, where scattered rocks by the side of the brawling stream offered a tempting resting-place, to spread out our mid-day meal. Couttet and Cachat were invited to join us, while the men and mules encamped at a little distance, and we all thoroughly enjoyed this re-commencement of our mountain life.

Immediately before us was a thick pine forest, through which the path ascends. It was a mere track, evidently little used, and sometimes nearly impassable from fallen trees and the effect of the late heavy rains. We left the mules to scramble up, and walked on through picturesque glades, where the ground was richly carpeted with ferns, and adorned by beautiful wild flowers, among which the abundant bloom of a delicate lilac orchid attracted our admiration. On emerging from the forest, we were glad to sit down and rest, while we

admired the fine view we had gained of the mountain range which separates these valleys from the lake of Geneva, as well as over the Col de Golèse to the valley of Samoëns. Then mounting again we rode over bare, rough pastures, to the summit of the Col de Coux. A splendid scene here burst upon us, as we looked over the Val d'Illiers (at the head of which Champéry is situated), guarded by the magnificent Dent de Midi, with the snow-crowned Tour de Sallière, and a long range of peaks and glaciers in clear relief against the sky. The distance was closed by the mountains rising above Bex, on the further side of the Rhone valley. Just below the summit of the Col the boundary lines of the now well-known provinces of Chablais and Faucigny unite with the Valais; so we here left the French territories and entered Switzerland. After walking down a short but steep descent, we found a good mule path led on to Champéry, through grand and beautiful scenery. We were particularly charmed with the view from a bridge, where the road crosses a mountain torrent, which forms a fine cascade above, as it rushes through a deep ravine. On the opposite side of the valley the mountains and rocks are magnificently grouped, with a wooded hill in the middle distance, and a rich pastoral foreground.

Judging from a group of peasants whom we saw at work in a field by the road side, we were led to suppose that the softer sex here borrow the husband's garments, as most suitable to such occupation! In one case petticoats were certainly discarded as quite superfluous.

The appearance of two English children, with their nurse, as we approached the village, showed that we had come down into accessible regions. The situation of Champéry is most lovely, and now that it offers the attraction of a good and moderate Pension Hotel, visitors are induced to find their way up from the Rhone valley. The house was full of English, and all the best rooms of course were occupied; but we were tolerably provided for, and were very glad to have reached such a pleasant Sunday resting-place; rendered more agreeable by the presence of an English clergyman, who read the Church service.

During the morning the rain again fell heavily, but after mid-day the clouds dispersed, leaving the mountains with that peculiarly clear outline so often seen after a storm. After dinner we went out, intending only to take a short stroll; but we were tempted to climb the hill above the village, where numerous pathways led to picturesque chalets,

perched on lovely knolls, or sheltered in warm nooks, with wooded heights rising at the back. At length we reached a cottage, most beautifully situated upon an open plateau, whence the sunset view was glorious. We soon recognised the Chamoissaire (which we had visited last summer), with the Diablerets, and other mountain summits, rising conspicuously beyond the Rhone. The Dent de Midi was brilliant in all the purity of recent snow, which had evidently fallen heavily during the storm of the early morning, no doubt adding materially to the difficulties of the high passes. The glaciers down which the descent of the Col de Sageroux passes on this side, looked very impracticable, and Cachat probably felt satisfaction in hearing that it was considered quite impossible to cross this season. There must be many most beautiful excursions from Champéry, and the scenery is so remarkably rich and varied, that I am tempted to place its attractions above those of Sixt. The cottages are generally large and comfortable in appearance, and peculiar for the external carving and colouring of the balconies, which are almost universally finished in the centre by a large wooden cross. My son had explored further with Couttet, before we thought the weather sufficiently settled to ven-

ture out far from the hotel. Descending from the curious plateau on which the village is built, they had crossed the river, and reached a magnificent amphitheatre of rocks beyond, which D—— considered almost equal to the Fer à Cheval, and quite surpassing in grandeur anything in the immediate vicinity of Sixt.

On Monday morning, at five o'clock, we started in a charrette for a most lovely, but certainly very rough drive, down the rich and smiling valley. The glorious mountains by which it is enclosed were perfectly clear, and seemed to cut the dark blue sky with their sharp rugged outline, as they were lighted up by the rising sun. There is apparently a good Hotel and Pension (kept, we were told, by quakers), at the village of Illiers, which is situated in the centre of the most romantic beauty of the valley. A little further down "Les trois Torrents" is almost equally picturesque, with its richly carved, and coloured, old houses, enlivened by the gay flowers with which the gardens were filled, and which, as long rows of bee-hives testified, were cultivated for profit as well as ornament.

The only drawback to the enjoyment of the drive was the state of the road—alternate slough and stones, or a pleasant intermingling of both; —

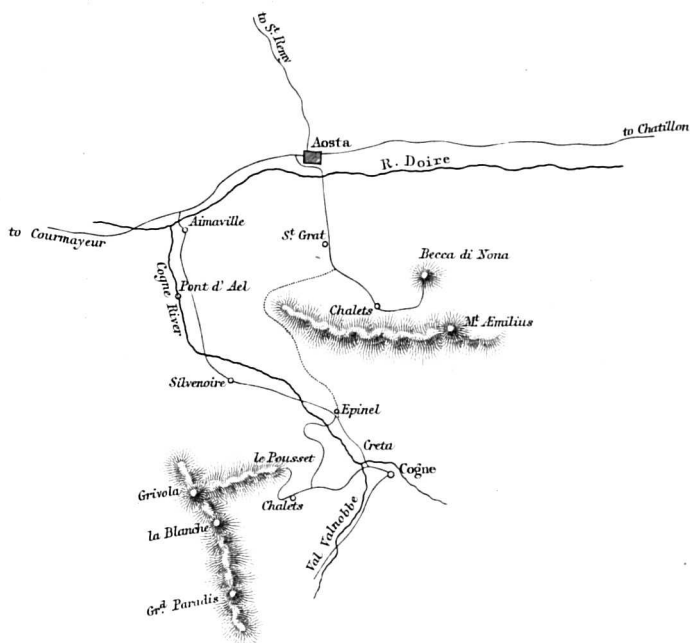
indeed its present state was well described by our driver as "ce n'est pas une route, c'est un ruisseau." This however, will soon be remedied, as a new road is in progress, which will make the Val d'Illiers one of the most attainable, as well as most beautiful excursions, within easy reach of Martigny and the Lake of Geneva. We were at Monterey in good time for the first train from Bouveret, and arrived at Martigny at half-past nine o'clock, A. M. Our arrangements were quickly made to go on to the Hospice on the Great St. Bernard. We had two very light open calèches to Liddes, where mules were engaged. After a magnificent day, the evening air from the mountains became keen and cold, before we reached the well-known friendly shelter, and sounded the large bell to summon Monsieur le Clavandier, who received us with kindly welcome.

We had intended crossing the Col de Fenêtre, and Col de Ferret, the next morning to Courmayeur; but thick *brouillard* and rain rendered such a course quite impossible. Our hospitable hosts considered the change of weather a happy interruption to our plans, as the Col de Fenêtre had been crossed only a few times this season, and then by gentlemen on foot. They did not seem to think the enterprise

suitable to ladies, and greeted us in the morning with a smiling expression of sympathy in our disappointment.

Later in the day the sky cleared, and with one of those extraordinary transitions to which Alpine travellers are accustomed, the afternoon proved lovely. The atmosphere of these high altitudes was so decidedly chilling, that we had previously ordered the mules, and determined to brave the weather, in order to sleep in a more genial climate. Now we were rejoiced to pursue our journey in sunshine to St. Rémy, whence we sent back our mules to Liddes, and had a pleasant drive down to Aosta.





CHAP. VII.

THE PANORAMAS OF THE GRAIAN ALPS.

NOTWITHSTANDING the lovely situation of Aosta, the extreme dirt and discomfort of its inns, and the wretched aspect in which human nature presents itself amidst its *crétin* population, combined with the relaxing atmosphere of the valley, have, until recently, induced travellers generally to pass through its beauties with little delay, and without any idea of the attractions hidden amidst the mountain range which forms its southern boundary.

Within the last three years, the comfortable hotel kept by Tairraz (an old Chamouni guide), charmingly situated beyond the town, on the Courmayeur side, has been opened, and offers excellent head-quarters to those who wish to explore the neighbourhood. Attention was first drawn to these valleys by Mr. King, who deserves the thanks of those who enjoy varying the ordinary highway of travel, for the

enterprising spirit with which he opened the way to scenes of grandeur and beauty, previously unknown. Mr. King's account, however, dwells much on the difficulties he encountered, and may not be considered sufficiently encouraging to induce many ladies to follow in his footsteps. The only lady who has given a subsequent account of her visit to Cogne, unfortunately met with bad weather among the mountains, and her description of the scenery is necessarily incomplete. I am therefore led to believe that our more recent experience may prove useful, and perhaps may aid others in exploring the magnificent scenery, and attaining the splendid panoramas of the Graian Alps.

It is four years ago since, after making the tour of Mont Blanc, we passed two days at Courmayeur, and thence ascended the Cramont. The weather was perfect, and the view from the summit most glorious. Indeed, amidst the many scenes of alpine grandeur and beauty with which later wanderings have made me acquainted, the panorama upon which we then gazed remains impressed upon my memory as one of surpassing loveliness. It is also comparatively easy of attainment, either from Courmayeur or St. Didier. The only difficulty in the ascent arises from the short slippery turf with which the

steep slopes, during the last hour's walk, are clothed.

The Cramont has now found a rival in the Becca di Nona, which lifts its rocky head conspicuously above the city of Aosta, and has recently gained local celebrity from the panoramic description published by the Chanoine Carrel.

Having been disappointed in our plan of crossing the Col de Fenêtre, from the Hospice of the St. Bernard to Courmayeur, we were obliged to take the ordinary route by St. Rémy to Aosta, where we arrived on the afternoon of Tuesday, August 14th. Our attention was directed to an extended excursion up the Cogne Valley, and my son was soon immersed in studying the best route, and the possibility of combining it with the ascent of the Becca di Nona, which was our object in revisiting Aosta. This combination proved impracticable, unless we were prepared to take the chance of such quarters for the night as an alpine chalet might afford, which would scarcely have suited our party; so having decided upon the Becca for our first expedition, the next want to be supplied was mules. Following the advice given by the Chanoine in his "Guide," we walked into Aosta to enquire for "Borsel frères," and were directed to a place where

a man, apparently well known as "Napoleon," undertook to provide them, and also to arrange substitutes for side-saddles. We had previously discovered that Aosta possessed only two specimens of such articles, of very peculiar structure; and they were already engaged by two English ladies for the next morning.

The mules were to come from Charvensod, a village on the other side of the river, and although the evening was closing rapidly, Couttet thought it prudent to go and assure himself that they would be properly provided. He ordered them at half-past three o'clock, for we wished to start as near four as possible; and on these occasions allowance must always be made for inevitable delays, and the dilatory habits of Italian muleteers.

We were all up early, and when nearly ready for breakfast, D—— reported Couttet in despair. No men or mules had arrived. The morning was fine, although some rain had fallen during the night, and a little *brouillard* hung upon the mountain sides. We waited very impatiently, especially after seeing another party set out, until at a quarter past five the mules made their appearance. The men tried to excuse themselves, and meet our indignant remonstrances, by declaring that it was then only a quar-

ter past four o'clock; but they were unable to explain the sun's having risen an hour earlier than usual, according to their time! Saddles for the gentlemen were all right, but "Napoleon" had altogether failed in his promises. No seats for the ladies were even suggested. One mule only was provided with the ordinary wooden pack used as the foundation for common burdens; and the other had to be sent back to Charvensod to be supplied. It was necessary for us to pass through the village, and we were assured that we should find the animal awaiting us in readiness.

Meanwhile, Mademoiselle Tairraz lent a small *duvet*, or quilt, which was thrown over the wooden frame. Iron handles fore and aft served me to hold by and steady myself, with a piece of wood slung across as a rest for the feet. These arrangements occupied time, and it was six o'clock before we started; my friend being on foot until we reached Charvensod.

After passing outside the old walls, and near the well-known "Leper's Tower," we crossed the Doire by a rough temporary bridge, hung to the side of a very substantial stone structure, which was in progress of building, to replace the old one, which had been destroyed by a heavy flood.

In about three-quarters of an hour we reached the village, when our patience was again tried, for the men dispersed to their homes, and many *adieux* had to be made, and wants to be supplied, before C——'s mule was at last brought forth. The seat prepared for her was similar to my own, the only variety being that her saddle-cloth was supplied by a piece of green baize. Although use makes most things easy, we were surprised to find how soon we became accustomed to our unpromising, and at first somewhat uncomfortable, equipments.

The beauty of the scenery increased as we rose above the valley; and after passing through a forest, a lovely view of the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa range opened. The Chapel of St. Grat, at which we soon arrived, is called the half-way station. The situation is very fine, on a plateau commanding a view of Mont Blanc, and all the adjacent peaks. Grey *brouillard* hung midway around the monarch, partially veiling his majesty; but the general grouping of mountain and glacier was glorious. Those who originally selected the spot to become a favourite place of pilgrimage from the valley, certainly showed their appreciation of the beautiful in nature, by placing the chapel in a position to repay the pilgrims for their toil in attaining it. Many ladies are

not equal to such a long mountain excursion as the ascent of the Becca di Nona ; but no one, who has a few hours to spare, should leave Aosta without visiting the shrine of St. Grat. It is an easy ride or walk of two hours, and the views throughout are lovely.

As we followed a narrow track over broken ground skirting the hill side, our expressions of admiration were suddenly interrupted by a great commotion among the mules, which the men soon discovered arose from our having disturbed a family of wasps. In retaliation, the troublesome insects attacked the poor animals, and excited their kicking propensities.

After passing the chalets of Chamolé, the ascent is again steep through forest glades. Then emerging from its shelter, we wound for some time along the open mountain brow, enjoying most glorious views. The sun was bright, but with enough of fleecy cloud to throw ever-varying effects upon the landscape. The beautiful valley lay stretched beneath us, with the Doire winding through it, like a silver thread. Numerous scattered villages, and picturesque chateaux were surrounded by woods and rich vineyard cultivation, with the miniature city of Aosta traced as on a map before us ; an enduring

and very remarkable monument of old Roman times.

On the opposite side of the deep valley, the mountain chain was magnificent, with the Velan and Combin forming the central group. Looking upwards, rather behind the course we were following, D—— now descried a new snowy peak, quite peculiar in character, which was soon identified as the Grivola, rising beyond the valley of Cogne. At the end of this splendid terrace, we found ourselves on the summit of a Col, with the rocky precipices of the Becca di Nona *en face*. To the right a steep descent led down to the chalets of Comboe, which appeared buried in a secluded valley. It seemed a great waste of time and trouble to dismount and walk down to the chalets, but there was no alternative. As we approached, I observed a group of men, apparently travellers like ourselves. They politely raised their hats as we passed, and I soon learnt from our guide, that the principal figure was the Chanoine Carrel, whose mountain costume, in a wide-brimmed straw hat, with a *fusil* slung over his shoulders, did not indicate his clerical profession. I ventured at once to address Mons. Carrel, as already well known to us by name and reputation. He appeared gratified by the recognition, and met

our advances very cordially. This mountain is quite his passion, and he told us that in another season he hoped to have tolerable summer quarters here, in a chalet of which the foundations only are as yet laid. Meantime he finds rough accommodation in one of the shepherd's huts, where he even contrives to receive visitors.

The men suggested that this was the conclusion of their part of the journey ; — at all events the mules must rest and feed. So much time had been lost in the morning, that, already late, we were anxious not to delay reaching the summit. The Chanoine seemed also to recommend our walking, if we were equal to the climb ; so we took one of the men as our guide, and started immediately on foot. After crossing a clear stream which rises in these pastures, the ascent begins. I foolishly set out too quickly, forgetting the wise adage, " More haste, worse speed." My breathing became affected, and for some minutes the palpitations produced were sufficiently disagreeable to make me doubt whether I should conquer the Becca after all. C—— walked on with my son and the guide, while my husband remained to keep me company with Couttett, who said "Madame" was suffering only from having neglected his constant caution, " Allez doucement."

Thus proceeding slowly, my difficulty was gradually overcome, and we reached a plateau, which Mons. Carrel suggests "was formed at a far-distant period by the glacier which descended from Mount *Æmilius*." We were tempted to linger by the beauty and variety of the flowers, which seem to have been brought forth, clothed with unusual brilliancy, by the combined influences of a moist morning, succeeded by bright sunshine. The pretty aster, and large yellow and white anemones were very abundant and conspicuous among the commoner Alpine flowers.

Undoubtedly the mules might have been used to this point; and I should recommend other travellers to take them thus far. The remaining ascent is quite steep and long enough to be fatiguing, on a warm day, when the sun strikes full upon the mountain side. After crossing a narrow bed of snow, rock after rock appeared to rise interminably above us. The rough and narrow path, winding upwards in steep zigzags, afforded little view to enliven our labours except when we turned round to rest, and gazed upon Mont Blanc, whose summit was fitfully revealed against the sky. Occasionally we caught sight of C—— and D—— energetically surmounting the crags above us; and thus incited to follow their example, we at last discerned the summit, and

joined the party in advance, whom we found in possession of a sheltered cabin, without a roof, which has been formed just below the highest point. The wind was so chill, that we felt it prudent to follow the Chanoine's advice, and after a rapid general survey, to cool and refresh ourselves before we were exposed to its full blast. The guide had the provisions in charge, and we gave D—— great credit for forbearance in delaying any serious attack upon the store until after our arrival. Now everything received full justice, for our walk had been decidedly exhausting; but all fatigue was quickly forgotten; and, quite invigorated, we turned to enter into the details of the mountain panorama around us. It was one o'clock—and, as usual, vapours had gathered round the more distant summits. Monte Rosa was quite shrouded, and at the opposite extremity of the Pennine range, Mont Blanc had resumed its drapery — but the long chain by which they are linked together was grandly beautiful. On the other side, the mountains of Cogne were clear and magnificent in their snowy grandeur; — the cone of the Grivola, and the Grand Paradis, with its great glaciers, being pre-eminently remarkable. Towards the Italian plains, the rocky crags of Mont *Æmilius* most provokingly shut out the view, and left

room for the imagination to extend the picture in that direction. The mist, which obscured the far distance, no doubt prevented our seeing the panorama in full perfection from the summit, whence the view is unquestionably very fine ; but the feeling left on my mind is decidedly in favour of the *beauty* of the scene from the Cramont ; while in extent and magnificent grandeur, the Becca must yield the palm to the superb panorama seen from the Pousset, with which we were at this time unacquainted. Nevertheless the attractions of the Becca de Nona are very great, especially opening, as it now did, so much that was new and interesting towards the Grivola and Grand Paradis.

At the end of an hour we turned to descend, passing rapidly over the loose rocks, which had made our upward climb so fatiguing. Our progress was quickened by watching a cloud drifting across the valley, which threatened a shower. Fortunately we escaped with only a few drops of rain, and in about an hour and a half again reached the chalets, where we were welcomed by the Chanoine, and kindly urged to accept such hospitality as his cottage home afforded. We could not resist his invitation, and were introduced through a dark outer kitchen to a room within, which evidently served for

bedchamber and parlour combined. The peasant woman, who apparently superintended the ménage, quickly served some excellent hot coffee, which proved a most welcome refreshment, even without the additional stimulant, which our host was very desirous to add from a suspicious looking bottle produced from a shelf in the corner. We resisted his persuasions, with many assurances that the coffee could not be improved; indeed H—— praised it so enthusiastically, that the good man, much to our amusement, responded with a significant “*Bah*,” which seems to be a clerical and polite mode of expressing incredulity. The small *salon* was quite filled, when we were joined by an Italian gentleman and his young companion, who were apparently lodged at the chalet. The former was evidently learned in botany, and was aiding the Chanoine in collecting and arranging the plants and flowers of these mountains. They showed us some flowers beautifully dried; and C——’s knowledge of botany, and interest in their work, was rewarded by the present of a specimen, to be kept as a reminiscence of this pleasant interlude in our day’s excursion.

We parted with many expressions of hope that we should meet again, and were soon mounted upon our uncouth saddles, intending to ride only over

the Col in front, and to walk as soon as we reached the forest, where the descent became steep. C—— and I had however gained confidence in our mules, and in the security of our seats, so that, much to D——'s astonishment, we were contented to retain them during the greater part of our homeward way.

Heavy storm clouds had gathered over the valley towards Courmayeur, and vapoury mists now rolled with strange vagaries around and beneath us, most beautiful in the changeful aspects which they assumed as they dispersed before the wind. Again the sun burst through, illuminating Mont Combin with its glorious crimson hues, and forming a brilliant phantasmagoria among the clouds. These gradually dissolved and faded, and the lovely tints of evening paled into grey twilight as we reached Aosta shortly before half-past seven o'clock. Tairraz was now at home to receive us, and welcome his old friend Couttet.

The English travellers, who had started before us, did not reach the summit of the Becca until after we left it; consequently they did not find their way back to Aosta until after dark. The ladies, having become nervous, had walked all the way down, and returned very wearied with such a long day's work.

The time which we occupied in this expedition was,

as near as possible, thirteen and a half hours ; divided into four hours to the chalets of Comboe, and rather more than two and a half hours to the summit. The descent required about five and a half hours, including our visit to the Chanoine ; with one and a half hour more spent in delays, and on the top. The only difficulty arises from the distance of the Becca from the nearest resting-place, which is at present Aosta. This makes it necessary to start very early, in order to gain a view of the panorama before the mists arise, which so often obscure it about mid-day. Our experience shows that the best intentions on the part of the traveller may be rendered quite fruitless, if dependent upon Italian punctuality. Perhaps the Chanoine may inspire his neighbours at Comboe with sufficient energy to lead to the erection of a mountain inn at the chalets, which would then afford most convenient and charming quarters, not only for the ascent of the Becca, but as a starting-place for the mountain route to Epinel, in the valley of Cogne.

Very noisy voices rose from the court-yard while we were at tea, and reached their climax in a shout of what sounded like anything but friendly *adieux*, as the men and mules took their departure to Charvensod. Our curiosity was excited, and we soon

learnt that this was the muleteers' mode of showing dissatisfaction with Couttet's settlement, notwithstanding the liberal way in which they had been treated. They had agreed with him for six francs each, and the usual *bonne-main*. He was told on our return to pay them well; and although they had now received ten francs each, they clamoured for twelve, and not succeeding in their extortion were discontented and abusive.

An excursion up the valley of Cogne was now arranged, but as this had not been contemplated in our original plan, we had not prepared for it by previous reference to the information given in "The Valleys of the Pennine Alps," and "The Lady's Tour of Monte Rosa." We therefore trusted to Tairraz's assurance that the accommodation was "*assez bonne*;" and it was agreed that where other people had found a resting-place, we need not fear encountering any serious difficulty. Couttet engaged two men at Aosta, each with a capital mule, and they undertook to go forward early on the following morning to Aimaville, there to engage two more mules in readiness for our arrival. This arrangement enabled us to drive the first two hours of our journey, and to commence our ride just at the entrance of the Cogne valley. We started on

Thursday morning in light voitures, carrying with us the side-saddles, of which we had previously secured the use. The morning was fresh and clear, with an atmosphere free from dust; which is not often the case in the valley of Aosta during the summer season; the drive was therefore very pleasant. Shortly before reaching St. Pierre, a road turned down a steep descent to the left; and, crossing a bridge over the Doire, we quickly reached Aima-ville, a dirty, unattractive looking place, owing to extensive ironworks, which presented the usual appearance of blackened walls and dingy looking people, quite out of character with the scenery around and the Italian sky above us. Much ore from the mines above is brought down here to be smelted, although not nearly to such an extent as in former times. The situation is truly beautiful, but the charms of nature are further disfigured by an unfortunately prominent, and curiously ugly, residence of indescribable architecture, which stands on a vine-clad hill above the village.

Our cavalcade was awaiting us at a small *osteria* just beyond Aimaville, where some time was spent before the side-saddles could be fitted satisfactorily. At last we were *en route*, the leader of the party being evidently one of the men from Aosta, who, from

his portly figure, was soon designated "l'homme gros." My steed was adorned with a highly ornamental head-piece, and carried a peal of bells round his neck, to enliven the way. C—— followed with her mule wearing a goodly sized dinner-bell, which gave forth a deep bass accompaniment, so sonorous in sound as effectually to exclude her from general conversation. Our way was under trellises, where the vines hung gracefully in

"Luxuriant garlands, drooping o'er us"

rich with pendant bunches of fruit. The grapes however were decidedly sour, in fact as well as in position, and therefore did not excite our longing, as they might otherwise have done. After ascending about an hour the valley before us assumed a character of wild grandeur, enclosed by lofty precipitous rocks, bearing evident marks of the presence of iron-stone in their rich red colouring. Deep below was the village of Pont d'Ael, remarkable for the remains of a Roman aqueduct, with an ancient inscription still quite legible. The river, a tributary to the Doire, is spanned by a single arch high above the stream. This arch formerly supported the water-course, which now forms a long gallery, open from end to end, and serves as the foundation for the modern road which crosses the

torrent at this remarkable bridge. Still keeping to the left, the mule path up the valley skirts the edge of the precipices, which are in some places so steep that the river is quite lost in the depth of the wooded ravine.

The remains of some old, and now deserted, iron works stand in a very wild romantic spot, where the valley widens out a little. Here an old bridge had been destroyed by the fury of the torrent, and the now quiet, and apparently harmless, stream was crossed by a frail looking wooden structure, soon to be replaced by a fine stone bridge of a single arch, in course of erection.

Above this, a small chapel formed a picturesque object, built upon the rocks which projected into the stream. "Le Gros" evidently felt the walk exhausting, and proposed to stop at Silvenoire for refreshment, but we were so unsympathizing that we declined any delay. The brightness of the morning had passed away. Gathering clouds looked threatening, obscuring the mountain summits; and as the road was remarkably good, we were anxious to hasten forward. Just as we reached the rocks, so remarkably inscribed under the directions of the late public-spirited Dr. Grappin, a slight shower showed that our forebodings were justified; and

we had only occasional glimpses of beauty, as we approached the village of Epinel, where the road passes under some of the houses in a peculiar way. The rain then began to fall heavily, and Couttet left us, to walk on more quickly, and prepare the good folks at Cogne for the reception of their unexpected visitors. This precaution was not unnecessary, as we found on our arrival at a house of unpromising appearance, with no exterior sign of an inn, at the end of the dirty village through which we passed, in constant peril of a shower-bath from the water which poured off the wide eaves of the houses upon the narrow roadway. We were thankful for shelter from the rain, and consequently not disposed to be fastidious; so that the dirty entrance and uninviting little room up stairs, into which we were apologetically ushered by Couttet, were not scrutinized too closely. He had at once opened the windows, and thus, to some extent, freshened the atmosphere. Now, to our great amusement, he proceeded to further purification; and having fetched some sand from the river, he carefully scrubbed the table, which apparently had not been subjected to such a process from time immemorial. We were then requested to stand aside in the passage, while the floor was swept and

partially cleansed ; after which process we contentedly took possession of our salon, with the added luxury of some wooden chairs, instead of the bench which formed the ordinary furniture.

The bed-rooms were provided in the curious stone tower-house just across the road, where "apartments" appeared to be occupied by permanent lodgers. We considered ourselves very fortunate in getting two of these rooms, instead of being obliged to enter the close dirty looking chambers adjoining our salon.

On the ground floor was a large room, furnished with three beds and two large boxes, which we supposed must be intended to afford extra sleeping accommodation if required. A long bench and a small basin completed the furniture of this apartment.

Two flights of wide stone steps, lighted by windows ignorant of the art of closing, and consequently admitting abundance of air, conducted to a room above, which, being comparatively comfortably provided, was selected for the ladies. The floor was apparently unacquainted with soap, but in both rooms the beds and linen were clean, so we had no reason to complain. We ventured to investigate the interior of the beds, and discovered that they were stuffed with the dried leaves of the maize, or Indian corn, which grows so abundantly in the valley of

Aosta. It makes a strange crackling noise whenever you move at night, but gives an impression of cleanliness, which we found justified by the entire absence of the plagues too commonly abundant in inferior Italian inns.

Before we proceeded to such close scrutiny, our attention had been irresistibly attracted to a most unpleasant and peculiar odour, which seemed to pervade the house, existing in most potent power in the passage outside our room. The explanation was, that the adjoining "apartment" was occupied by one of the king's "Chasseurs Royales," with his family. A wolf had been killed the previous day in the royal preserves, and the man had just been employed skinning the animal in the passage, producing a wolfy scent, certainly not agreeable as an accompaniment to the toilet. We consoled ourselves by the belief that it was not unwholesome, and had at least the charm of novelty.

Immediately after our arrival we cooked some of our own portable soup, which enabled us to wait patiently for a more substantial meal. The hostess, a very quaint little person (whose body seemed pressed flat like a mummy, producing a square effect, of shoulders without a neck), was most good-tempered and willing. The kitchen and crockery were

really clean, and, with Couttet's active aid and superintendence, the dinner proved remarkably good, the larder having actually produced a piece of veal, with potatoes, cheese, and good bread. Heavy driving storms continued all the afternoon. Towards evening the clouds cleared off a little, and we went out for a walk; but the necessity of splashing through the mud was not encouraging to a prolonged excursion, and we soon returned to enjoy our own tea, and go to bed. The night was very dark and stormy. The house did not possess a lantern, and it was a work of difficulty to get across to the tower and find our way upstairs. Gusts of wind down the passages, and through broken windows, repeatedly extinguished our candle, leaving my friend and myself to darkness and laughter, until Couttet came to our assistance, and acted as guide to our bedroom door.

We went to rest with hopes of the morrow's excursion, which vanished at the depressing sound of dull continuous pour which greeted us on awaking. We all looked rather melancholy at breakfast, but there was no remedy except patience, and a determination to find such amusement as our very limited means allowed. C—— had always a resource in her sketch-book. I contrived occupation for my needle; while H—— and D—— studied the map,

and a few loose sheets of paper containing useful information, thus kindly recorded by some of the very few travellers who had as yet found a resting-place at Cogne. One gentleman strongly recommended an excursion from Epinel (through which we had passed) up to the chalets of Arpesson, attainable by a good path through the woods, and commanding a splendid view of the Grivola and Grand Paradis, which he compared to the scenery from Mürren. He also recorded with great admiration the panorama from the Pousset, which he considered "as equalling, if not surpassing the view from the Gorner Grat." "The Pousset" was a name quite unknown to us, and our immediate inquiries resulted in finding that it belonged to a rocky mountain ridge, about four hours distant from Cogne. The knowledge that there were scenes of such beauty attainable was rather tantalizing, when there appeared so little prospect of the mountains emerging from the clouds, to give us the opportunity of exploring them. It became evident, as the day wore on, that a second night at Cogne was inevitable, and we began to think of dinner as a pastime. To-day the village produced no *viande*, but my son discovered some fowls cooped in a corner of the kitchen, and our table was luxuriously served.

After many excursions across the passage to aid in the preparations, D—— appeared bearing a bowl of potatoes roasted in their skins, followed by Couttet with the chickens. The good little woman was most anxious to supply our wants, and diverted us extremely by a little by-play at the door with Couttet. Both being charged with something for the table, with innate politeness each wished to give precedence to the other; and the scene is best described by an adaptation of the old nursery rhyme:

“ The Dame made a curtsey, Couttet made a bow ;
The Dame said, ‘ À Monsieur,’—Couttet, ‘ Place à vous ! ’ ”

A jug of Couttet’s best mull (which he produces in some apparently magical way, whenever it is needed), was greatly appreciated at the conclusion of our entertainment, and was quite necessary in such depressing circumstances.

Suddenly the external aspect brightened. The wind and clouds engaged in fierce collision, until the latter were conquered and began to roll away. The sky cleared, and our men were speedily disturbed from their polenta, to prepare for an excursion up the Val Valnoble. It was quite an excitement for all the idle population of Cogne, who congregated at their doors to witness the departure of our caval-

cade. After crossing the meadows, the pathway skirted the bank of the river, which was greatly swollen by the heavy rain, so that the road was frequently flooded, and in some places quite destroyed by the rushing waters. The mules carried us safely through deep pools, and among slippery rocks, which occasionally made the way difficult. Then crossing swampy meadows, we passed some dirty chalets, and reached a wild scene, where the narrow valley was strewn with huge masses of rock, evidently detached in some convulsion of nature from the precipices around.

A frail bridge, too insecure for the mules to venture across, here obliged us to dismount and leave them, while we pursued our walk to gain a nearer view of the grand mountain range, with the fine glaciers of Money, which descend from the Grand Paradis, and close the valley. On our way we encountered a miserable dirty man, who looked half-crazed; he exchanged a few words *en passant* with our muleteers, and hastened down towards the chalets. We were told that he was a shepherd in charge of his flock on the mountain pastures, and his scared appearance was explained by his account of the visit of another wolf during the previous night.

The remains of one sheep told the sad tale of its

fate. The rest of the flock were scattered in all directions ; many of the poor animals, led by wild terror, having in the darkness taken refuge upon narrow ledges, and among apparently inaccessible crags. How forcibly Scriptural language recurs to the mind in the description of such a scene of pastoral life ! the “coming of the wolf” to attack the sheep ; then “he catcheth them and scattereth the flock,” and “the hireling fleeth.” Whatever may have been the shepherd’s conduct in the time of danger, the poor man was now on his way to seek aid, and procure ropes to rescue many of the sheep from the perilous positions in which we afterwards saw them, enclosed by rocks and precipices on the mountain side.

Ere long, distant thunder reverberated among the rocks, and a dark drifting cloud soon gathered on the mountain before us, discharging itself in a heavy storm of hail, which made us glad to gain such shelter as the sloping side of a huge detached mass of rock afforded. When the storm passed away the atmosphere became remarkably clear ; the snowy mountain line glistened like silver against the deep blue sky ; and the transparent colouring of some of the glacier precipices was most lovely, as they caught the light. The afternoon sun threw its long shadows upon the scene, which was indeed magnifi-

cent, and we could scarcely turn our backs upon its glories, even when we knew it was full time to retrace our steps.

The Chasseur had told us of some little bouquetins, which, having been taken young, were being reared at the chalets, where we now inquired for their guardian, and were introduced to the poor animals, which seem to pine in such a state of unnatural restraint. Two or three had already died, and others appeared likely to share the same untimely fate. They had become weak upon their legs, and a kind of spongy substance formed round their mouths and nostrils, which prevented their taking food. We were also shown a large pair of horns, which the man said had been found only a few days previously, in recently melted snow. The mountains of Cogne are the hunting-grounds of the King of Sardinia, and are so strictly preserved, that to kill a bouquetin is an offence followed by fourteen years at the galleys.

The air became fresh and cold. The mountains were perfectly clear, and the rocky ridge of the Pousset, which was now pointed out to us, was sharply cut against the sky. We were charmed thus to realise the great natural attractions of the scenery around Cogne, which needs only a tolerable inn to make it the most delightful excursion within reach





C.G. del.

Hanhart, lith.

COGNE — FROM THE TOWER HOUSE.

of Aosta. Until this want is supplied, fastidious travellers will do well to avoid it.

On our return to the house, we found that a kid had been killed during our absence. It was conspicuously hung up in the passage to our sitting-room, perhaps to assure us that there would be ample *viande* to supply our wants the next day. A clear frosty evening encouraged us to think of varying our way back to Aosta by a mountain climb. After holding counsel with our neighbour the Chasseur, we determined to mount the Pousset, in happy unconsciousness that this was the ascent described by Mr. King as "The Grivola," and so difficult to accomplish.

Our little window commanded a lovely view of the snowy range at the head of the Val Valnoble. When we looked out at four o'clock on Saturday morning, the first sight of a cloudless sky was most exciting. Half an hour later, my son's voice below the window called to us to "look at Mont Blanc." We thought he was dreaming until I hastened down, and from the steps outside the tower I saw the vista at the end of the valley closed by the glorious mountain. We gazed on the cold pure beauty of this unexpected vision, until the beams of the rising sun embraced it, making the summit

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glow with the warm blush of early day, and then gradually illumining the whole scene.

We were impatient to set forth, but as usual the men delayed us. Couttet had great difficulty in rousing them, and then they would not be hurried at their breakfasts, to suit the vagaries in which they doubtless considered that we indulged. We seemed the only people awake and lively at Cogné at five o'clock; and it was half-past before we were all gathered and *en route*.

The old woman had been so pleased with her visitors, that she was quite pathetic in her farewells, suggesting that as this was the first, so probably it would prove the last time we should gladden her with a visit: — the young gentleman might perhaps come again, but the ladies! oh no; it was not likely! — The master of the house had twice ascended the Pousset; he was therefore engaged to accompany us, and proved a trustworthy and efficient guide.

There had been a hard frost; the ground was crisp and white, and the air quite cold and invigorating. After passing down the meadows, our path, instead of crossing the bridge to the village of Creta, turned over the pastures on the left, and soon began to ascend rapidly up the face of what had

apparently been an old timber slide. We then entered the forest, through which the way was very steep, and so rough in places that we frequently thought it more prudent and pleasant to walk. The men however had no idea of sparing their mules, and we were provoked to see "le Gros" scramble upon the saddle whenever H—— dismounted. We emerged upon a plateau, beyond which a range of enormous rocky precipices, forming a kind of spur from the main chain, seemed an inaccessible rampart. The highest pinnacle of these formidable crags was the object of our expedition, and it was as yet difficult to guess how our ambition was to be gratified. We had here a perfect view of the valley of Cogne, in its full extent, from the now distant village, backed by the Fenêtre de Cogne, to the points of the Grand Jorasse (part of the Mont Blanc range), by which the extremity is closed. Opposite to us the chalets of Arpesson were seen on the mountain side, and we were shown the line followed by the byway (at present but little traversed) to the chalets of Chamolè, on the ascent of the Becca di Nona.

There is a group of huts, mentioned by Mr. King, on this plateau, but the inmates were not visible, and neither C—— or I were met by the expressions of kindly sympathy bestowed upon "E——."

We pursued our way through forest, over rocky debris, and half frozen water-courses, until we reached the last habitations, where the shepherds only stared at us. Our own men evidently thought our further journey a great waste of time and trouble, and our fat friend was proof against our persuasions to accompany us for the good of his health! Here the mules were left, and the provisions divided, one portion being given to the guide to carry for our refreshment when our toils were over. Accompanied only by Couttet, and the guide from Cogne, we started on foot, and mounted above the huts, keeping at first rather to the left, over rough ground, covered with short herbage. Then turning to the right, we wound upwards, ascending more rapidly. It was soon evident that our course must tend towards a projecting rock, where a narrow ridge appeared to turn the edge of the precipice. My husband and son, inspirited by the keen fresh air, were in advance with the man. When they reached this spot, their figures stood out upon the ledge, in full relief against the sky.

C—— and I followed with Couttet, in no eager haste, for the perfect brilliancy of the day made the view magnificent, as we looked back upon the

glittering snowy range which was gradually opening upon us.

Just beyond the corner I have described, our party re-united, for the guide said the ascent was *très rapide*, therefore we had better keep together and follow carefully. Between us and the last ridge was a steep wall-like slope, where we slowly wound upwards, the rough grass affording safe foothold. Occasionally Couttet's hand was useful, when a long step was needed to turn an angle ; but no difficulty occurred to interfere with our steady progress. The Pic of the Grivola was joyously greeted as it appeared above our heads. Then leaving the grass, we passed over rocks, and as my friend and I reached the edge of the last steep *arête*, shouts of "splendid ! magnificent !" urged us on. In a few minutes we joined H—— and D—— upon the summit, where, literally perched on pointed crags, we gazed upon a scene of never-to-be-forgotten grandeur and beauty. The Grivola, or Corne de Cogne, rose immediately before us, startling in its proximity and brilliancy, separated from the pinnacle on which we stood by the great glacier of Straglio. We looked down a fearful depth upon perpendicular precipices of brilliant ice, by which the smooth surface of the glacier was broken before it became intersected by

huge crevasses, as it descended towards the valley. The Grivola resembles the Matterhorn more than any other mountain, in the way it rears itself on high ; but in its peculiar structure and character it stands alone. One side is a very steep icy cone of brilliant purity ; the other presents scarred crags and fearful precipices, springing from snow fields and glacier. To the east the "Blanche," "Monte Rossa," and "Grand Paradis," continue the glorious snowy range, hitherto scarcely known to us even by name ; forming one section of a panorama of indescribable loveliness, ending in the "Fenêtre de Cogne." To the north our view embraced the whole Pennine chain, commencing with Mont Blanc, and extending over all the intervening range in cloudless beauty, to the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa ;—the latter only partially visible above the ridge of Mont *Æmilius*. The Becca is comparatively diminutive, and quite overlooked from this higher point.

A serrated ridge of precipices, decreasing but slightly in elevation, stretched out beyond us, and was terminated by the rocky headland, which projects into the valley of Cogne.

It was a scene to be gazed upon with increasing appreciation for a much longer period than we could venture to remain on our airy pinnacle, which

the guide now told us had only once before been attained by a lady. We began to think that we had unintentionally emulated the exploits of "E——," although without encountering the perils to which she seems to have been exposed.

After a last, long, lingering look at the glorious panorama, we were obliged to descend, and only now realized the extreme steepness of the slope; which for a quarter of an hour required great care and steadiness. We all got down well, and when we reached the narrow ledge (which D—— named Marmot Corner, from a trap we found there) the precipitous cliffs below were safely passed.

It was then a comparatively easy and rapid run down the mountain side; the distant snow-clad summits becoming gradually lost to sight as we descended to the chalets, where we arrived in about an hour.

The time occupied had been three hours from Cogne to the huts, and an hour and twenty minutes to the highest point:—we remained there an hour, and at twelve o'clock we were ready to descend to the valley at Epinel, and continue our journey to Aosta. We preferred walking over the slippery rocks, and ultimately did not make use of the mules again until the descent was finished. Leaving

the lower chalets to the right, the guide led us through rough underwood till we reached a pleasant and much better path than that by which we had ascended from Cogne.

Entering the forest, which was fragrant with the scent of newly felled larch, we skirted round the rocky headland which I have mentioned as projecting into the valley, and came out upon a picturesque dell, opening on the left up to the Grivola, and closed by its descending glacier.

The views, as we passed beneath the forest glades, were very beautiful; and the sunny banks were covered with remarkably fine Alpine strawberries, of which D—— gathered abundance for us. A rather rapid descent, by a stony pathway, ended at the river side. Here we mounted, and crossing the bridge (where we parted with our guide) soon left the village of Epinel behind.

We were greatly struck by the beauty and grandeur of the scenery of the Val de Cogne, as it now appeared bright in sunshine, under a clear sky. Projecting bluffs, amidst banks clothed with rich foliage, ornamented by the pretty drooping berries of the barberry, and more massive coralline bunches of a dwarf tree, which we at first mistook for mountain ash, formed beautiful contrasts. Below, the turmoil

of the turbid torrent was greatly increased by the recent storms, as it struggled in foaming cascades, and made its noisy way over the rocks.

The mules had not been fed at the huts above, it was therefore quite necessary to stop at Silvenoire for their benefit. During this delay we sat down on a bank, where C—— could get a sketch, which apparently afforded infinite amusement to the juvenile population of the village, who congregated to peep at us.

As we continued our ride down the valley, we again greeted the Grivola, which we found becomes visible (in ascending) about half an hour above Pont d'Ael, raising its towering crest in prominent beauty high above the pass, where the ravine narrows, and the general character of the scene is most grand and impressive. After passing through Aimaville and crossing the Doire, the last hour and a half of our ride along the high road was wearisome. We gladly finished our day's work soon after seven o'clock, and resumed possession of our comfortable rooms at the Hotel de Mont Blanc. During the evening my son heard loud words, and found that a question had arisen with "le Gros," who was attempting imposition; but as Couttet was habitually left to settle these matters, my husband

When the accident occurred, instead of finding the guides ready to throw all their powers of resistance on their batons, the great safeguard in such perils, the free action of their hands must have been impeded by the necessity of clutching at the rope, and all command of the batons lost. How far the two men exerted themselves before they sought their own safety by letting go the rope, no one can say. No doubt poor Tairraz clung to his charge, and was sacrificed to his duty, thus paying a most sad penalty for any error of judgment for which he may have been responsible. We could not but feel thankful that the names of the young men thus fearfully launched into eternity were all unknown to us, and that we were not called to sympathise with the sorrow of personal friends in such an unexampled calamity. It was sad indeed to think of the misery such tidings must carry into the homes which they had probably left so recently in full health and energy.

We found D—— very indignant, when on Sunday morning he learnt, in answer to his enquiries as to the result of the previous evening's disagreement, that C—— had been completely outwitted by "le Gros," and had succumbed to his roguery. When the story was explained, we all shared his indignation, and certainly thought our good friend

had been too easily “bullied.” As a specimen of Aosta morality, and a warning to others, the facts are worthy of record. “Le Gros” (whose real name is Honoratè) was engaged with his comrade, and their respective mules, at Aosta, where he has the reputation of great wealth and consideration as a muleteer. He undertook to meet us at Aimaville, and there to secure two more mules for our service. The poor men whom he engaged were peasants of the village of St. Pierre, and, as Couttet ascertained during our three days’ expedition, their rate of charge was much less than that of our “City” friends. At the conclusion of our journey, these men were eager to get back to their homes on Saturday evening, and having been immediately paid by Couttet, they departed perfectly contented and happy. Honoratè, who, with an eye to his own benefit, had intended to be the medium of settlement, was angry and evidently disappointed, when he found the business was settled. He and his companion were out in the court-yard of the hotel when Couttet proceeded to pay them, unfortunately without any witness; — “le Gros” receiving the money for both. Couttet then went into the house leaving the men together. At the end of about a quarter of an hour, he went out again, and

was immediately accosted by the great rogue, with a request to be paid. Of course such an extraordinary demand amazed Couttet, who said that he had already satisfied every claim. Whereupon the man affected astonishment, and said, *he* had received no money ! begged his pockets might be searched, and appealed to his comrade, who seemed very confused, but confirmed the falsehood. After a noisy altercation the men departed, but they returned in an hour, accompanied by Honoratè, jun. to support his father. They repeated their falsehoods, and threatened Couttet to lodge a *procès* against him, which would detain him at Aosta on Monday ; so that at last, fearful of causing us detention or inconvenience, he yielded to combination and extortion, and the scoundrels departed with their ill-gotten pelf. Of course when Couttet's accounts were made up, they showed a deficit of the exact sum thus twice paid ; — for this he considered himself responsible, because he said he ought not to have made the payment without a witness ; indeed we should not have known the extent to which he had been cheated, if we had not insisted on a full explanation of the disturbance.

In the afternoon my husband and D—— went to call on the Chanoine Carrel, who had told us that

he should come into Aosta from his mountain quarters, in readiness to perform his Sunday duties. They found him just at the conclusion of the church service, attired in clerical costume, altogether a different person, in appearance, from our kindly host at the chalet. He heard the story of the muleteers with great indignation; and sent H—— to the Procureur du Roi, to lodge an information against Honoratè, which would probably lead to his being “visited” by the police, and summoned before the authorities, in a manner not creditable to his reputation. Any restitution of the plunder was scarcely to be expected, but we were very anxious that “le Gros” should have some check put upon his future proceedings, by thus giving his roguery publicity;—and in case he was made to disgorge, H—— desired that the money should be given to the poor.

The Chanoine was greatly interested in the account of our brilliant success on the Pousset, and also in the story of the discontent of the muleteers from Charvensod, after our ascent of the Becca. He said he would apply to the Syndic of the Commune, and endeavour to get a tarif fixed to prevent the recurrence of such annoyances. The rate which he suggested as fair payment was seven francs a mule,

and a franc "bonne-main." Monsieur Carrel kindly presented my son with one of his panoramas of the Pennine Alps, as a remembrance of his visit, and we afterwards completed the picture, by buying his recent publication, giving the southern range, (that of the Graian Alps,) which was very useful in illustrating the view from the Pousset, nearly as well as that from the Becca; thus enabling us to correct our topography of that line of mountain and glaciers. In the afternoon some fresh arrivals appeared at dinner, and we had pleasant companions, besides receiving a satisfactory account of the state of the St. Theodule Pass, which we intended to cross to Zermatt. We also heard that we should probably find our friend Mr. V. Hawkins at Breuil with Professor Tyndall, awaiting fine weather to allow an attempt to conquer the hitherto unascended precipices of the Matterhorn. Some conversation in reference to our recent excursion led to our finding that our new acquaintance had "The Valleys of the Pennine Alps" as a travelling companion; and great was D——'s interest and amusement in having the opportunity of identifying our mountain expedition with "the Ascent of the Grivola." The description of the magnificent panorama is most complete and brilliant; but those

who know the position of the "Pousset," relatively to the "Grivola," cannot but wonder at the designation applied to the excursion. My friend and I greatly enjoyed the quiet Sunday at Aosta, perfectly satisfied, until the evening, with the beautiful view up the valley commanded by the window of our room. The day was brilliantly fine, with a fresh pure air, after the recent storms, which tempered the usually relaxing atmosphere. Such weather made us anxious to be again among the mountains, and all was arranged for an early departure on Monday morning for Chatillon, whence we were to ride up the Val Tournanche to Breuil.

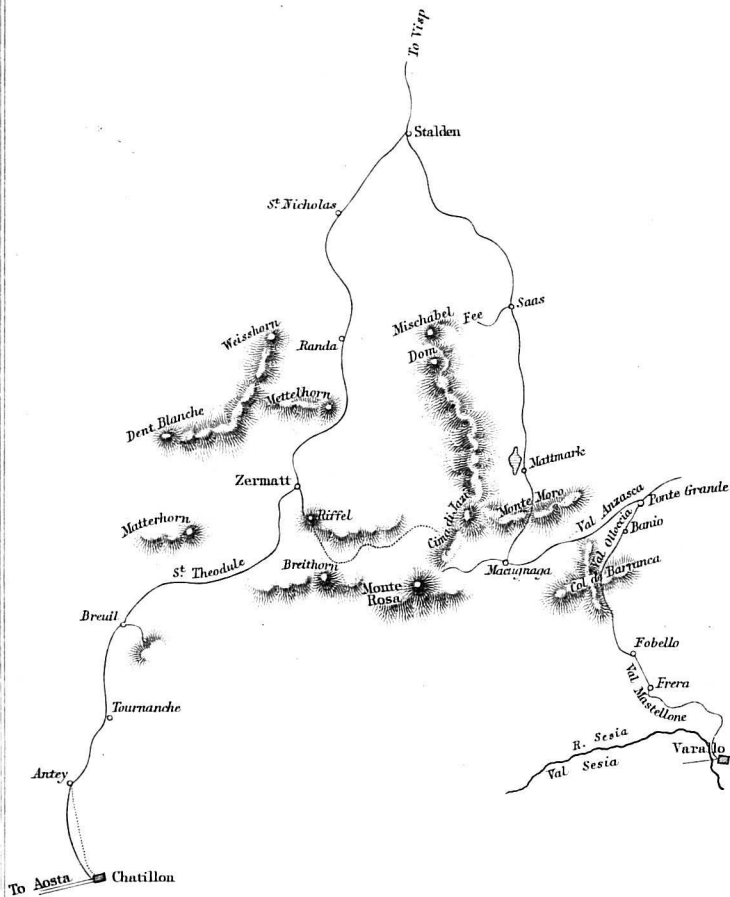
CHAP. VIII.

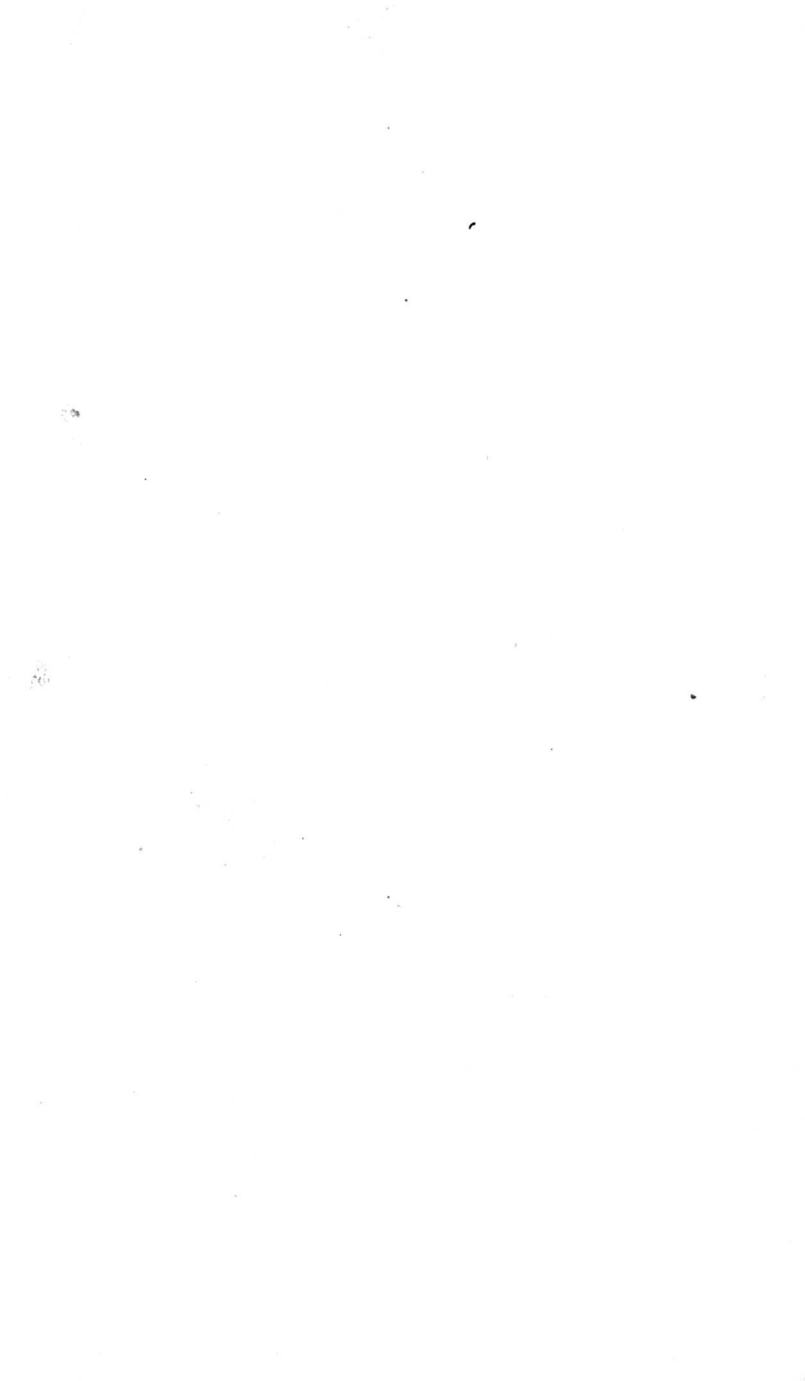
BREUIL AND THE ST. THEODULE.

MULES had been ordered at Chatillon, where, contrary to usual experience, we found the men ready to receive us on our arrival from Aosta.

We went into the hotel only while some provisions were procured for our mid-day meal *en route*; an affair which was not arranged without an unblushing attempt at extortion in the charges, which did not improve our opinion of the morality of the valley of Aosta, in regard to honesty.

We had previously traversed the Val Tournanche, but in the contrary direction, so that the scenery appeared under a new aspect, as we passed through the fine woods of walnut and Spanish chestnut, which gave a pleasant shelter from the sun. My son meantime found his way with Couttet by the shorter path, which crosses the meadows, keeping near the river. They rejoined us in about an hour,





just as our attention was attracted to the extraordinary remains of the fine Roman aqueduct, which clings to the face of the perpendicular rocks, apparently quite beyond human reach. Just before reaching the village of Antey, the magnificent Matterhorn came in sight, rising majestically, and closing the end of the valley. A beautiful rocky foreground, bluffs clothed with rich foliage, and most picturesque groups of dark brown chalets, formed a combination of colouring, which made us long to transfer a slight remembrance of the scene to the sketch-book; but it was not a convenient time to stop, for the mules were to rest further on, at Tournanche. The animal which H—— was riding belonged to Antoine Pession, a well-known guide of this valley, with whose manner and appearance we were very favourably impressed. His book contained many testimonials from English travellers, recommending his mule and himself, which he showed us with evident pride. Our notice was thus attracted to the entry of a friend, followed by one bearing a well-known signature, which we read with surprise and regret. The writer, forgetting that the object of such observations is simply to give information to future travellers, had made Pession's book the medium of some splenetic remarks, and had mentioned a lady's name with a

want of courtesy and good taste inexcusable under any circumstances, and certainly not justified by anything in her husband's previous entry.

The village of Tournanche formerly offered nothing but a most miserable inn, known only to be avoided ; but the landlord has become enlightened, and has recently greatly improved his house, in the hope of attracting some of the many travellers who now pass through the valley. We consequently found our provisions quite unnecessary, but the man was extremely obliging, and made no difficulties. The little salon was very tidy, and the bedrooms looked clean, although very roughly furnished. I must in honesty add, that we did hear afterwards that they were not free from discomforts, which do not present themselves to a daylight view.

After passing through the wild narrow gorge, in whose dark depths the river has so marvellously worn its hidden channel, we found the appearance of the valley above quite changed within the last two years, by the formation of a small lake produced by a recent avalanche. The course of the stream had thus been obstructed, and the ground was strewn with débris from the overhanging crags. The rough pastures and chalets of Breuil soon appeared ; the Matterhorn as a background, piercing the sky, and

towering high above the grand range of which it stands the centre.

We found rooms at the "Hotel," and heard that Professor Tyndall and Mr. V. Hawkins had started very early in the morning to try the ascent of the mountain. Later in the afternoon they returned, having attained a much higher elevation than any of their Alpine predecessors; but fearing that daylight would fail them, they had found it necessary to stop in their enterprise. Both of the gentlemen, as well as their guide Bennen, expressed their conviction that the summit is accessible from this side, but they did not mean to renew their attempt this season. It was impossible not to enter heartily into the interest which the subject excited; but I must own to a conviction that the ascent of the Matterhorn is one of those daring and hazardous exploits which offers no justification for the fearful risk to be incurred in further efforts to surmount the dangers presented by the awful precipices by which nature has guarded the magnificent pinnacle.

Professor T—— has already shown what startling deeds may be accomplished by the energy and determination of a dauntless spirit, combined with great physical power; but calm consideration raises doubts whether such ardour may not be carried too

far, especially when by its indulgence valuable lives are imperilled for no adequate object.

The evening passed most pleasantly, although distant rolling peals of thunder gave notice of a coming storm, awakening doubts as to the prospect of our crossing the St. Theodule the next morning.

There was heavy rain during the night—the day opened with driving clouds and *brouillard*, and all arrangements for moving were necessarily postponed. About six o'clock some improvement appeared, and it was proposed that we should start; Couttet having specially engaged two of the mules from Chatillon to carry us on this morning, for the first hour or two of our journey. He now discovered that, contrary to all established usage among guides and travellers, an Oberland guide, who had arrived the previous evening from Zermatt with three ladies, had bribed the man with my mule to break his engagement, and return at once down the valley to Chatillon. They had apparently hoped to get quietly away before Couttet should discover the trick which had been played on him; but in this they were unsuccessful, and he was of course extremely angry; endeavouring to impress upon the Oberland man, that in a Chamouni guide such conduct would be punished by his removal from the *rôle*.

H—— heard the cause of angry discussion just as the party were prepared to start; and as it appeared very doubtful whether the lady was not intentionally ignorant of the discourtesy by which she was to benefit, he thought it right to state the facts, just as she had mounted, and was riding off with my mule. The explanation was very awkwardly received, but no apology or restitution was offered, although she was obliged to wait and listen to a very plain exposition of the duty of doing as you would be done by!

We effected a start before eight o'clock, but the weather did not promise well, —thick *brouillard* soon met us whirling down from the mountains. At the end of an hour cold driving rain set in, and by general consent a retreat to the hotel was sounded. A party of gentlemen returned soon after us, so we did not feel our discomfiture inglorious; and after drying our damp garments, we were glad to settle ourselves comfortably until the external aspect improved. Professor Tyndall took his departure for Aosta; and later in the day Mr. Hawkins also left to cross the St. Theodule, which to him offered no difficulties, even in a fog. Thus our pleasant circle was dispersed, and we took possession of our anteroom as a salon; leaving two French gentle-

men to beguile their time very excusably, by smoking in the room below.

Soon after three the day brightened and tempted us to prepare for a walk. The landlord suggested that we should visit a mountain lake, of which he pointed out the direction. We thought it prudent to take a peasant for our guide, and after following the stream up the valley behind the house until it narrows and becomes a ravine, we crossed a plank bridge, and began to climb up the rough pastures. At first our great attraction was the beautiful wild flowers, with which the ground was carpeted; a large and brightly-tinted pansy being most abundant; but soon we stopped to gaze on the splendid view which was opening around us, as the clouds rapidly dispersed and the afternoon sun lighted up the glorious scene. Still we continued to climb, and without our guide we should probably have failed to discover the object of our search; —at last, after we had passed some wretched chalets, and had scrambled up the rocks above, it appeared beneath us,— a dark mountain tarn, reflecting the surrounding crags upon its surface.

This spot is so attainable, and commands a view of such extent and grandeur, that it deserves to be known to all who may visit Breuil, and have time

for the excursion, which occupies three or four hours very agreeably. We stood on a knoll above the lake, looking across the valley upon a splendid range of rocky pinnacles and snow-capped summits, which form an apparently impassable barrier between Breuil and Prerayen, at the head of the Val Pellina. The Matterhorn was clear from cloud, light ærial vapours assuming forms of wondrous beauty, only adding to its charms, especially as they caught the warmth of the rapidly declining sun, and dissolved beneath its influence. The eye then descended to the St. Theodule, and moved over snow fields and glacier to the Bette Furca, and the Cimes Blanches, a pass now becoming better known, and occasionally traversed by mules to the Val d'Ayas.

Finding us good mountaineers, the man took us back by a much steeper, but more direct course, descending the face of the hill, and bringing us down upon some rocks of extraordinary blue colour, high up the ravine. We reached the hotel just as the last sunbeams faded from the Matterhorn, leaving it to the cold grey shadows of twilight. A benignant looking ecclesiastic had arrived during the afternoon, and I was soon summoned by H—— to be introduced to him, as the Abbé Cavaignet, well known as a liberal and enlightened professor at Aosta.

The Abbé enquired after English friends, whose acquaintance he had made *en voyage*, and most politely expressed his regret at not having been aware of our visit to Cogne, as he would gladly have given us introductions to the Curé there; indeed he might probably have had the pleasure of accompanying us himself.

We retired to rest early, for a clear starlight night promised well for the morning, when we intended to move at daybreak. Couttet's anxiety led him to call us at half-past two, and as we obeyed his summons without question the whole party were equipped, and breakfast was over, while it was yet too dark to commence our journey comfortably. We patiently waited the advent of day, watching a soft light which seemed gradually to spread above the mountains to the north-east. Suddenly the morning star appeared, casting its bright beams around with marvellous brilliancy. It was an apparition so unexpected and so lovely that we gazed almost in silence, with thoughts too deep for words. It seemed to enable one to realize the brightness of the daystar on high, as we may suppose it to have guided the Eastern kings on their pilgrimage of faith.

Couttet had provided mules, to be used as far as

we liked to ride, and we mounted while the “diamonds in the sky” still sparkled above us. Gradually star after star vanished; at last even the bright planet faded away, and the soft beauty of twilight merged in the warmer hues of opening day.

As we left the pastures, and ascended the Moraine, the distant view to the south opened gloriously. We recognised the Becca di Nona and Mont *Æmilius*; then the Cogne range, and the snows of the Grand Paradis, with the cone of the *Gri-vola*, bathed in golden splendour. The varied tints assumed by mountains and sky were indescribably beautiful—gold merging into orange and rose colour, and intermingling in glorious confusion; — with nearer, silver summits thrown forward by a sky of deep violet. Immediately above, the *Matterhorn* stood in cloudless grandeur, while in front were the glaciers and snow-fields of the *St. Theodule*. The ground was very hard, and the rocks were slippery from the frost; indeed it was wonderful to see how the mules found foothold, and clambered up the steep side of the Moraine. Even after we had dismounted, the men urged the poor animals on, in order to save themselves the trouble of carrying the baggage.

We retained three porters to accompany us to

Zermatt, and after dismissing the rest of our cortège with kindly *adieux*, we continued to ascend as far as possible upon the rocks; not entering upon the snow until an elevation was attained which avoided the longer route over the glacier, where, two years ago, we had crossed deep crevasses, and looked down into their wondrous iced caverns. The two Frenchmen, besides two English travellers, were now in sight behind us, accompanied by their guides, and a small dog, which appeared to be an independent member of the party, and certainly had the advantage of its biped companions in the light impression it made upon the snow.

After a walk of fifty minutes, we reached the hut upon the Col, and for the second time we were favoured with an unclouded scene of magnificence and beauty. Although the sun had power, the air was extremely keen, and we enjoyed a cup of hot coffee provided in the hut, which has now changed occupants; the old man who was there on our previous visit, and who had for several seasons made it his summer residence, having died last year.

The French gentlemen and their guide now attached themselves together with a rope, and separated from the rest of the party, in order to ascend the Breithorn, which shone forth in glittering

and tempting loveliness, apparently offering no great difficulties to a good mountaineer. The icicles hung in long fringes from the eaves of the hut, and it was much too cold for us to rest upon the rocks above. So when our porters were rested, and my friend had gained some knowledge of the mountain range (to which she was now introduced for the first time), we turned our steps downwards. The snow was deep, but dry and quite uncrevassed; the walking consequently was not unpleasant, and the air was most exhilarating.

I think that the most striking part of the scene (as a snow pass) was reached about an hour below the Col, when we looked back at the silvery line which bounds the horizon, resting on a sky of the deepest blue. Towering above the vast intervening snow-fields, the tremendous grandeur and wonderful form of the Matterhorn is most impressive; while on the other side the varied outline and beautiful grouping of the Monte Rosa chain revived all our previous impressions of intense admiration of this scenery. In two hours we reached the rocks, and after a scrambling descent over broken ground, crossed the rough bridge, beyond which a path continues along the mountain side, winding above the Gorner Glacier, with the long valley of Zermatt stretching away in the

far distance. It was rather a long walk over the pastures, before we reached the village ; where, after picking our way through its muddy lanes, we found rooms ready, with letters and newspapers awaiting us, at the Mont Cervin hotel.

Comparing our two journeys across the St. Theodule, I find it difficult to give a preference to either route. Each has its own peculiar beauties, and these are variously developed in the chequered light and shade of sunrise and early morning. The route from Breuil certainly possesses one advantage, in the shorter period required to reach the summit. Three hours allows ample time, of which one hour only is necessarily on foot. In ascending from Zermatt, I think, we occupied nearly five hours ; about three being over glacier, or through deep snow.

The character of the Pass was greatly altered by the different temperature of the two years. In 1858 the snow-field was soft, yielding to our footsteps, and requiring considerable exertion to get on. The glacier was also intersected by deep crevasses on both sides of the Col, so that constant vigilance was necessary. Now, the great depth of snow, consolidated by continued cold, effectually concealed such dangers, and made the surface dry and comparatively

firm under our feet. Our own experience thus shows how easily travellers may give varying accounts of the same journeys amidst the higher Alpine passes; the difference being occasioned only by temporary causes. We fortunately enjoyed cloudless skies and brilliant sunshine on both occasions, and can therefore form no adequate idea of the dangers to which the wanderer under the shadow of the Matterhorn may be exposed when encircled by dark clouds, and bewildering mists.

CHAP. IX.

THE RIFFEL AND CIMA DI JAZI.

WE had heard that a large party was assembled at the inn on the Riffel. Couttet therefore took the precaution of sending up there very early on Thursday morning to secure beds, and after breakfast at Zermatt, we found our way up the mountain side.

The morning was breathless, with steamy vapours midway on the mountains. The Riffel was quite in the clouds, and when we arrived there, literally nothing was to be seen. About one o'clock, however, the sun asserted its power, and the view around became perfectly bright. In a few minutes the little *salon* was cleared of its previously desponding occupants, and we were all pressing upwards to the Gorner Grat, where a numerous group were established with telescopes and glasses, watching with eager interest the movements of a party who had left the hotel in the early morning to ascend Monte

Rosa, and who were now returning. Six tiny specks could be traced following each other down the steep snow slope. Now one remains stationary, and is left considerably behind; at the end of half an hour those in advance appear to hold consultation. A second black speck detaches itself, and while the others rapidly descend towards the rocks it begins to toil gradually up again, to the still motionless spot upon the snow. All was now speculation as to the possible cause of such eccentric movements. Was it accident or illness? One of the gentlemen watching the proceedings had two young sons among the party, and his anxiety was great until he saw the two specks were re-united; — after a short interval we watched them both descending in their companions' tracks, until all were lost among the rocks.

Meantime we were enjoying the magnificent beauty of the glorious panorama with which we were surrounded; a view scarcely to be exceeded in its combinations of grandeur and loveliness. Another party, which we knew included our friends Mr. and Mrs. C——, now appeared at the upper end of the Gorner Glacier, returning from the Cima di Jazi; a pilgrimage which we also hoped to accomplish. They had adventurously started in the morning, when mist and *brouillard* still hung upon the mountains, and

had been rewarded for their energy by the after brilliancy of the day.

When the air became chill we turned to descend, with the glorious Matterhorn before us, resplendent in evening loveliness. The atmosphere was perfectly clear and cloudless, except where puffs of light vapour seemed to issue from the summit of the Cone, as if the giant was indulging in a cigar. This peculiar appearance is produced when the moisture held in the air comes into contact with the icy pinnacle, by which it is chilled and converted into vapour. It was gently wafted upwards by the wind, in a long light wreath, and the effect was almost magical, as the filmy cloud caught the radiance of the setting sun.

“ One little cloud, and one alone,
Far in the highest ether shone ;
Gay as a warrior’s banner spread
Its sunward margin—ruby-red,
Green, purple, gold, and every hue
That glitters in the morning dew,
Or glows along the rainbow’s form.”

In a few moments these hues of unearthly brilliancy faded, and all passed away in bright ruddy streaks, which it needed but little effort of the imagination to convert into flame.

Similar effects are, I believe, sometimes produced

by impalpable cloud-like snow, which, whirled from the rocky precipices, where it has scarcely found surface to cling to, becomes a sport to every eddying current and change of atmosphere. Professor Tyndall describes the mountain summits as presenting strange and beautiful mutations under such influences, but I am not sure whether the same brilliant colouring would be produced upon the snow-cloud.

The foreground of the hotel presented a very animated appearance as the various travellers came in. The gentlemen from Monte Rosa reported a very successful ascent, and all were in high spirits. The delay which we had watched was occasioned by the misconduct of a guide, who in the first instance lagged behind to empty the brandy flask, which unfortunately had been entrusted to him, and then became incompetent to take care of himself. Our friends from the Cima were also delighted with their day's expedition, which Mrs. C—— had accomplished without difficulty, although the soft state of the snow had made the walk occasionally laborious.

Professor Owen, Mr. Hinchliff, and other Alpine notables, were of the party. Mr. Hawkins had also rejoined us, and in such a circle the evening passed delightfully, much enlivened by most amusing anecdotes from Professor Owen.

The learned professor (or as he was lately designated by one of our American cousins, "The great Bone Man,") must be a rather dangerous visitor to some of the celebrated shrines, where his knowledge might be inconveniently precise if applied to the investigation of their holy relics. We were extremely amused by an account of his visit to Cologne, and his examination of the vast collection of the (so-called) bones of the 11,000 virgins, there religiously preserved in the church of St. Ursula. The professor announced the collection to consist of the remains of various descriptions of creatures, amongst which horses and asses, cats and dogs, had numerous representatives; so that the poor virgins have not been consigned to select companionship after death, however carefully they may have been guarded during their earthly pilgrimage.

In the course of the evening, we were giving some directions for the next day's preparations when our hostess amused us much by her surprise at finding that both the ladies purposed walking to the Cima. She seemed to doubt our powers, but finding we were determined to amuse ourselves in our own way, she turned with a look of commiseration to my son, saying, "Mais, pas le petit?" "Oui, certainement—pourquoi non?" was my response, "Ah! mais il

n'est pas assez fort ! — le pauvre petit !” and the good woman went away evidently considering us inhuman parents, and the indignant “petit” very hardly used.

On Friday morning we were ready soon after four o'clock, our party consisting, besides ourselves, of Couttet, and a local guide (who also carried the knapsack), of Mr. Hawkins, and his friend Mr. M——. The latter amused us by starting for a long day over snow-fields and glaciers, provided with an umbrella instead of an alpenstock ; — however, he proved himself a much better Alpine walker than such apparent inexperience led us to expect.

Our own party, including Couttet and the guide, wore veils, which are almost essential when you are likely to be long exposed to the mid-day glare upon the snow. Some people prefer wire or gauze spectacles, but we always found good gauze veils answered the purpose, and were more convenient.

It was uncertain whether ropes might be required, but it is always better to be prepared for an emergency ; and Couttet appeared with a substantial coil hanging across his shoulders.

The heavens were cloudless, but a canopy of vapour hung low down, between us and the valley of Zermatt, as if the world beneath had not yet drawn aside its curtains to admit the morning light.

The freshness of the air was delightful as we walked upwards, keeping behind the Riffelhorn, and then winding along the mountain side by a very narrow path, below which the rocks descended steeply upon the Gorner Glacier. Again we were lost in admiration of the beauteous sunrise tints upon sky and mountains. The whole range from Monte Rosa to the Matterhorn was extended before us, and we beheld

“ ——— the hill-tops all aglow
With purple and with amethyst ;
While the whole valley deep below
Is fill'd, and seems to overflow,
With a far-surgings tide of mist.”

In less than an hour and a half we left terra firma, and descended upon the glacier, up which our course now ran for some distance. The recently fallen snow was crisped by the hard frost of the preceding night, and gave good foothold over the ice, where we soon found, and followed, the tracks left by our predecessors yesterday. Making constant detours to avoid crevasses, with which the surface was broken, we passed off the glacier, and reached a sheltered nook below the precipices of the Hochthaligrat, where a stream trickles down from the rocks, and a kind of *jardin* is formed, which we agreed would be a delightful resting-place on

our return. Now we lost no time, but entered upon the vast snow-field, which seemed to rise before us in gentle swells, until the distant summit of the Cima was relieved against the sky. The surface was firm, and pleasant for walking. The pure air, the wondrous grandeur of the scene, and its almost boundless expanse, produced feelings of awe mingled with exhilaration, and that sense of intense enjoyment, expressed in the simple words,

“How awful, yet how beautiful!”

The brilliancy of the snow was very dazzling; bright prismatic colours trembled around, and we seemed to crush sparkling gems beneath our feet as we walked rapidly onwards. Leaving the Findelen Glacier, and the pass of the new Weiss Thor (leading to Mattmark and Macugnaga) on the left, we made a circuit through deeper snow, towards the only real climb in the ascent of the Cima. We were in the midst of a wide white world, with a cloudless sky above us, and a keen wind beginning to make itself felt, when my attention was drawn to a very curious optical illusion. We were taking a curved line, my son and Couttet being a few hundred yards in advance, where they now stood still, waiting for us to join them. Mr. Hawkins had advanced about midway between us, when I saw

him attended by a reflection on either side, giving the appearance of three figures walking together. On reaching D——, Mr. H—— turned in profile towards us, his spectral companions following his movements; realizing more the effect of the ghost in the stereoscope than I could have imagined possible. As we approached, I exclaimed to my son that our party was increased by unlooked-for ghostly company, and I found that he had been watching the same phenomena; C—— and myself having appeared to advance with similar attendants.

The last hour's climb up the glittering cone was more arduous labour, for the snow was deeper, and we felt the full force of a bitter wind, whirling it up around us in dry drifting clouds of icy dust.

We still kept nearly to the tracks left by our friends, which were here crossed by the footmarks of a chamois, evidently made in the early morning, when the little creature had perhaps wondered what strange visitors had been invading its domains.

I was now very glad of Couttet's help, while C—— accepted the arm of the Zermatt guide. Suddenly, as we struggled against the wind, I saw him rush from her side, making frantic efforts to stop her hat, in its flight towards the precipices which descend over Macugnaga. Happily its course

was arrested, and the man succeeded in retaining it safely, by throwing himself down over it, on the snow; a process which did not tend to improve its appearance when restored to its proper position. The loss would certainly have been most inconvenient; and who can say what melancholy tales might have arisen as to the fate of its supposed unfortunate owner, had it been discovered beneath the rocks, on the Macugnaga glacier?

As usual, D—— was first on the summit. The sky was absolutely cloudless; the atmosphere perfectly transparent, and scarcely a doubt had been entertained that the view would, if ever, be perfect now;—but alas! the common fate awaited us. Looking downwards, Italy appeared

“ A land of cloud and mystery,
A dim mirage;

a sea of milky billows, rolling far beneath us, effectually concealing the distant plains, and blotting out every thing but the mountain tops, which pierced through the cloud-world, and produced a most curious effect as they caught the sunshine. On the east, it was clearer in the far distance, and the mountains of the Tyrol were there pointed out to us.

On the Swiss side no imagination was needed to aid in realizing the magnificence of the scene. Mont Blanc was perfectly distinct in the horizon, with the varied groups of vast intermediate ranges, in front of which the glorious Matterhorn reigns supreme. The line of snow continued on one side to the beautiful Weisshorn, while on the other, the eye travelled over brilliant peaks and glaciers, to the various summits by which Monte Rosa itself is crowned. The Cima forms a portion of the continuous range, and Monte Rosa seemed brought into such close proximity, that a sense of its vast grandeur was almost lost in that of its surpassing beauty.

The Strahlhorn formed the vanguard of another group, in which the Dom and Mischabels were prominent; the horizon being bounded by the distant Oberland peaks, beyond the valley of the Rhone.

Below the snow-field from which the Cima raises its head, the two great glaciers take their downward course, apparently immoveably bound in their icy fetters, and impressing the mind with a feeling of their duration throughout eternity.

The intense bitterness of the blast made it quite impossible to face it for more than the few minutes necessary thus to embody the view which was

spread before us. Looking at each other, we could judge of the extremely unbecoming effects of the excessive cold; we all appeared cadaverous and suddenly aged. Fortunately such effects are not permanent, otherwise few ladies would be found rash enough to ascend to such high altitudes!

There was not the slightest shelter: so after creeping as close as Couttet would permit to the verge of the precipice, and looking down over the snowy eaves which form its treacherous edge, into the awful depths of the valley beneath, we turned round to follow the example of Mr. Hawkins, who had speedily vanished from the summit, and was now in comparative shelter.

Our descent soon became a rapid race, as we made long slides, or occasionally plunged into the deep dry snow, which was thus scattered in clouds around us. My husband and D—— were rushing down together, when I saw them come to a sudden halt, and his father began to rub "*Pauvre petit's*" hands, which, being gloveless, were becoming rather alarmingly numbed. However, friction soon produced some circulation, and then H—— discovered that the batons, which he had put down on the snow, had started on their own account, and taking a very short cut, had startled Mr. Hawkins far below, by

the apparition of what appeared to be some strange creature in rapid motion. Both poles lodged at the base of the first steep slope, and were easily recovered by the guide.

When we reached partial shelter, we refreshed ourselves slightly, to counteract the cold, and then resumed the most interesting part of our walk, over the grand snow plateau, to the *jardin* under the rocks. The view from this spot is so glorious, that it would be quite worth an excursion from the Riffel, and would be attainable to many ladies, whose walking powers were not equal to undertaking the whole distance to the Cima di Jazi.

Having enjoyed our provisions, we reposed for half an hour on the rocks—certainly to the injury of our complexions; the full blaze of the sun's rays, at mid-day, being a wonderful contrast to our recent suffering from cold.

Rested and refreshed, we again took to the glacier, which had much changed in appearance since the early morning. The snow had become soft and yielding, leaving the surface less secure, where the ice was crevassed. We were following in rather a broken line, certainly with no idea of danger, Couttet, as usual, leading the way, when he suddenly sunk down, the snow bridge over a crevasse

having yielded to his weight. Our good friend thus partially disappeared from sight, only his head and shoulders remaining visible; while his outstretched arms retained him in safety, until ready assistance relieved him from such an unpleasant position, almost before we had realized what had happened. No occasion having previously arisen for the use of the rope, which Couttet's precaution had led him to bring, it still hung across his own shoulders, where it would not have afforded much aid, had he fallen to any distance down the crevasse. A little startled, we proceeded more carefully. Without further adventure, beyond occasional plunges into the snow, we reached the edge of the Moraine, and landed upon the rocks, from whence the walk up the mountain side was rather a tiring conclusion to our day's work. The air however was fresh and pleasant, and we entered the Riffel Hotel again at three o'clock, after an expedition of great excitement and novelty, during which pleasant companionship had added much to our enjoyment and appreciation of the glorious scenes through which we had passed.

It had been suggested to us that we might, with less fatigue to ourselves, have crossed the new Weissthor to Mattmark, instead of returning to the Riffel. We quite regretted not having been

aware that this course would be practicable until after domestic arrangements had been made with the "Wascherinn" at Zermatt, which obliged us to return there to reclaim our baggage. We had talked of continuing our walk down to the valley this afternoon, but we had been actually on foot for ten hours, and by common consent a second night at the Riffel was agreed to. We thus enjoyed another pleasant evening, when the same party assembled at dinner, during which our various adventures were discussed.

The next morning we were all to disperse; our friends over the St. Theodule to Aosta, accompanied as far as the Col by some gentlemen who intended to ascend the Breithorn, while we meant to breakfast at Zermatt.

At five o'clock we were the first to start, and greatly enjoyed the beautiful views as we descended. The freshness of a lovely morning added keenness to the appetite with which we were prepared to welcome the *déjeuner à la fourchette* previously ordered to be in readiness for our arrival.

"Mons. le President," as the host of the Mont Cervin is generally styled, had been most attentive in securing horses, and at half-past seven o'clock all was ready for our somewhat long ride to Saas.

CHAP. X

ASCENT OF THE METTELHORN.

WE much regretted that the limits of our holiday obliged us to leave Zermatt without devoting a day to the ascent of the Mettelhorn, which Mr. Hinchliff strongly recommended to us, as combining some of the greatest attractions of the grand Alpine scenes amidst which it stands. I am thus unable to describe its beautiful panorama from personal acquaintance; but the same friend has most kindly allowed me to enrich my pages by the following interesting account of his first ascent, which was made shortly before we had the pleasure of meeting him at the Riffel.

Mr. Hinchliff's thorough appreciation of all that is beautiful and interesting in nature, combined with his well-known powers of pleasing description, give a charm to his short account of the Mettelhorn, which will probably induce many of those who traverse

the Val St. Nicholas to follow in his footsteps, in the hope of participating in his enjoyment.

“Of all the starting-places for Alpine expeditions, Zermatt still appears the most fertile and the most inexhaustible. Every kind of peak, pass, and glacier is to be found there; and whether the traveller wishes to attain the highest summits and cross the most magnificent passes, or merely desires to reach some more moderate ‘specular mount,’ whence he may glance contentedly over scenes of his former triumphs, or plan new schemes over ground to be examined with his telescope, he has every opportunity for gratifying his taste.

“Of the latter class of mountains I know none more tempting or more satisfactory than the Mettelhorn, which we ascended on the 8th of August, 1860.

“Our party consisted of three, Melchior, Anderegg, and Moritz Andenmatten accompanying us with a small modicum of luncheon.

“A narrow footpath leads from the western side of Zermatt towards the gorge of the Triftbach, keeping at first close to its right, and then for about a quarter of a mile tending in the direction of Randa. Some steep and rough zigzags then lead to a high grassy down, covered with flowers, and affording a

charming view of the valley of Zermatt and the mountains on the opposite side. We followed a pretty level course over this for some time, and then, turning sharply to the left, rounded the shoulder of a fine grassy hill, and soon had a splendid view of the whole of the Trift glacier and the grand wall of mountains, from the Gabelhorner to the Trifthorn, from which it issues.

“Here we followed a sheep-track in the direction of the Weisshorn, about the middle of which we were greatly interested by the proceedings of a brace of ptarmigan. They sprung up from almost under our feet, and separated. Each of them flew slowly, now and then almost tumbling head over heels, and seeming ready to drop: they behaved exactly as partridges do when suddenly surprised near their nests, and this led us to believe that we had not yet seen all the family. A few yards further we found a brood of young ones, like little chickens, scrambling about in all directions, and it was clear enough that the old ones had been only shamming lame to divert our attention from their children. We soon caught one of the little ones, in a horrid state of panic, but of course let it go at once, and went on our way.

“A little further is a quantity of the clearest and

most beautiful fresh water, distilling from a bed of rock and shale, and we unanimously voted that, with such a glorious view and such natural accommodation, it would be difficult to find a more charming spot for a mountain picnic. Immediately beyond this the snow slopes commenced: the first was gradual, leading us on to a small snowy plateau, something like that which is reached after passing the Mur de la Côte of Mont Blanc. Right in front of us was the last cone, which is very steep, but was easily surmounted in a quarter of an hour, and then we were on the summit of the Mettelhorn, in rather more than four hours' easy walking from the hotel at Zermatt.

“The actual peak is one of the sharpest in the Alps; so much so, that it is difficult to find easy places for repose: on the side towards Zermatt the rocks descend perpendicularly for several hundred feet, while, on the other side, the descent is remarkably steep. Probably no view in the mountain-world can exceed in beauty and interest the view from the Mettelhorn. Those from Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa are of course more vast, but what is gained in distance is lost in distinctness. Certainly I know of no view of Monte Rosa to be compared with that from this point. Towering high above

the Riffelberg and Gorner Grat, Monte Rosa is here seen in its greatest perfection, and a far better notion is acquired of its beauty and elevation than from the more frequented points for observing it.

“Immediately across the Zermatt valley rises the splendid chain of the Saasgrat, every point of which, from the smaller Mischabel to the Strahlhorn, may be most accurately examined.

“Towards the north is the view, par excellence, of the giant Weisshorn, whose untamed rocks and *couloirs* still seem to defy approach. Happy the man who first reaches that noble peak! The view is probably quite unsurpassable.

“In a cleft on the rocks at the very summit, we found the purple mountain Saxifrage, *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, in full bloom, and never was a mountain-child more kindly welcomed. The height of the Mettelhorn has been ascertained by the engineer, M. Bétempo, to be 11,190 feet above the sea; and will be so laid down on the forthcoming Zermatt sheet of the Swiss Federal Map.

“We spent an hour or two on the top, and planted a minimum thermometer firmly among the stones which form a kind of beacon, where it could not easily be blown away, and at the same time could not be buried in deep snow.

“In descending we followed the same route as we had taken in the morning for more than half the way, when we agreeably varied it by going down to the glacier stream which issues from the Trift glacier, and following its course till we arrived at Zermatt. This part of the expedition, however, ought not to be exactly followed by ladies, for there is a *mauvais pas* round some steep rocks, with no footing but a ledge an inch wide, and the roaring stream immediately below.

“If, however, they cross the stream by a small wooden bridge, soon after passing the foot of the glacier, and keep well up on the southern or Matterhorn side of the gorge, they can pass easily, and descend by a beautiful mountain path to Zermatt.”

The beauty of the mountain scenery which encloses the Val St. Nicholas impressed us more forcibly each time we traversed it, and we were not surprised to see that the yearly increasing number of travellers is leading to speculations towards supplying additional accommodation to induce them to linger on their way. Where the valley expands at Randa, we passed an apparently good house, in progress towards completion as an hotel, which will probably

be opened next season. It is well situated, with a fine view upwards towards the Breithorn; the Mettelhorn rising high above, on the left as we descended. When the beautiful view from this mountain is better known, and it becomes one of the favourite excursions from Zermatt, Randa may perhaps be found a convenient resting-place after the ascent has been accomplished.

We persuaded the men who accompanied us with their horses, to pass through St. Nicholas and stop to rest at Stalden, which divided the distance more agreeably, and enabled us to dine and remain quiet during the heat of the afternoon, from two till four o'clock.

While we were waiting for our dinner, our sympathies were excited by the arrival of a young man, who entered the room looking wretchedly ill, and apparently faint. His exhausted condition was soon explained by the account he gave of his morning walk, which offered an illustration of the dangers to which inexperienced travellers may unintentionally expose themselves.

The youth was on his way to Zermatt from Saas, where he had slept the previous night. He was travelling with an elder brother and a friend, whom we had met near St. Nicholas, contentedly following

the usual route up the valley. Our new acquaintance was more adventurous in his aspirations, and determined to cross the mountains, entirely ignorant of the difficulties and probable dangers which he might encounter in such a course.

We could never understand how it happened that he was allowed to leave Saas, quite alone, at 4 A.M. without even a crust of bread in his pocket as provision by the way! The natural consequence of such a proceeding was, that, knowing nothing of the route, he became bewildered upon the mountains; and after mid-day, overcome by the heat and fatigue, and faint from want of food, the poor fellow owned to having been fairly frightened at the position in which he found himself. Happily he encountered a shepherd boy on the high pastures, who relieved him from his dilemma, and undertook to guide him down to Stalden; where he arrived, after upwards of ten hours' wandering, to find himself still a long journey from Zermatt.

My little medicine case enabled me to offer a restorative, which was at first declined, perhaps with some reasonable doubts of my medical skill! but when the ordered dinner was obliged to be put aside untouched, the young man resigned himself to necessity, and gladly accepted the proffered aid, which

happily proved most efficacious, and its good effects were gratefully acknowledged.

We were glad to avail ourselves of the opportunity of sending a small packet to a relative at Zermatt; from whom we afterwards heard that the wanderer did not get beyond St. Nicholas that evening, thereby causing great consternation, and certainly not groundless anxiety to his companions. The safe arrival of "the lost brother" on Sunday morning, was a happier termination of the adventure than might have been expected from such a rash and ill-considered expedition.

It was rather a long day's journey to Saas, but we were well mounted; and a little wine, judiciously presented to the men at Stalden, put them into good humour. They were ready to continue their journey briskly when we started again at four o'clock, and we enjoyed a most lovely ride up the Saas valley. As we wound along the mountain side, the silvery summits of some of the Oberland range closed the Visp end of the valley, while beneath us was the magnificent rocky ravine, with its brawling river and most fragile looking bridges. At one point high above the torrent three magnificent larches formed a beautiful foreground to the picture. At a village just beyond, another inn was very near completion,

in the centre of the grandest scenery of the valley. The path soon creeps downward and crosses the river in front of the beautiful fall of the Schweibach, which descends from the heights of the Balfrin. Then after traversing a wild rock-strewn valley, and passing a village with a conspicuous church, a forest glade on the hill side led us out into the fertile valley of Saas, just as the last glow of sunset faded upon the mountains, giving place to the cold pure light of the pale queen of night, rising above the Mittaghorn.

We finished a most lovely ride by a lively trot across the meadows to the entrance of the village, where we found the picturesque cottage hotel, "de Monte Rosa," shut up, and superseded by the ugly and pretentious "Monte Moro." Our former host, the renowned Herr Imseng, was close by when we dismounted, and we greeted his reverence as old friends. Our feelings were rather hurt to see that he evidently did not recognise us, and seemed to have no remembrance of the *joli garçon*, in whose youthful travels he had taken so much interest four years ago.



C. G. del.

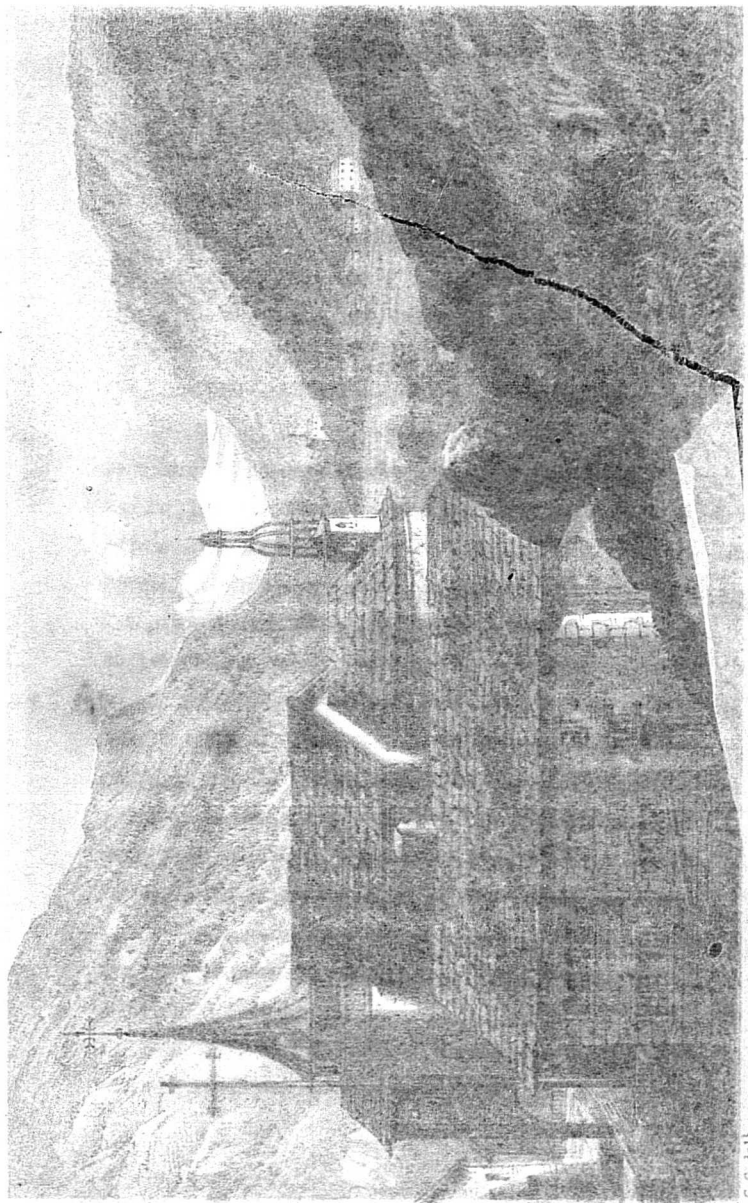
Hanhart, lith.

CHAP. XI.

MATMARK AND THE MONTE MORO.

SUNDAY morning was again warm and cloudless. After breakfast we strolled up the hill side, behind the old hotel, and gained a lovely view of the beautiful snowy range which encloses the Fée valley. The village seemed unusually thronged with peasants; and we soon learnt that they were assembling in preparation for a funeral. It was interesting to watch the various groups, especially the women, who were to take part in the ceremony. Their preparations were made in the churchyard by assuming a peculiar funeral garb, consisting of a long white garment put over the ordinary dress and confined round the waist by a cord. A piece of thick white linen, folded square and placed upon the head, completed the costume.

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In the afternoon we walked up the opposite hill side to show C—— the romantic valley and village

of Fée, under the shadow of the Mischabel and Dom. No one should leave Saas without visiting this exquisite spot, where, nestled close beneath snow and glaciers, you find a fertile and well cultivated valley, with its village church and picturesque cottages. On a former visit we had scrambled over rocks and through water-courses, behind that branch of the glacier which descends into the valley and effectually closes the upper end. We had thus reached the Fée Alp (or Jardin du Glacier), an isolated pasture, on the upper part of which is a rough cabin for the peasants who tend the cattle, which are brought during the short summer to pasture upon this green oasis, in a desert of ice. During our walk homewards, I felt some inconvenience from a previous bruise on my foot; and as prudence suggested a little care before crossing the Moro, we decided that our journey the next day should be limited to Mattmark, a ride or walk requiring only between two and three hours from Saas. The Curé assured us that the afternoon might be pleasantly spent by my husband and son in ascending a mountain above Mattmark, where he proposed meeting us himself later in the day.

Couttet having secured a horse and a mule, both provided with ladies' saddles, C—— and I mounted

on Monday morning to leave the bright and smiling valley. As we looked back, the views were very lovely, while in front the character of the scenery gradually changed; and after we had passed a fine waterfall, which dashed in foaming cascades down the mountain sides, all became grandly wild and magnificent. The valley contracted until it was completely blocked up by the huge rampart formed by the Allelein Glacier, which descends from the snows of the Strahlhorn and Allelienhorn. The path mounted the steep Moraine, and we reached the upper level of the glacier, beneath which the river gropes its sub-glacial way from the lake above.

Our steeds were left to find their way unencumbered down the rocky staircases, and we walked the remaining distance along the banks of the gloomy Mattmarksee, to the little hotel at its further extremity, the only sign of habitation in this scene of grim desolation. The wind was rising, and before H—— and D—— started with Couttet for their walk, clouds began to gather round the mountains,

“Vapours rolling down the valleys, made
A lonely scene more lonesome;”

and they were soon driven back. Fortunately they returned just as the threatening storm burst forth,

and made us all thankful that our day's journey was completed. When the sky cleared a little, C—— was able to get from the window a sketch of the wild valley above, with an enormous solitary boulder in the foreground. We watched travellers coming down from the Moro; and when they reached the welcome shelter of the inn, we were amused at having our acquaintance claimed in this desolate corner by a gentleman and his wife, whom we had met last year at the Æggishorn. They had since followed my husband's recommendation to visit Mürren and the Schilthorn, and we were pleased to find that our admiration of its beautiful panorama was quite confirmed. The snow on the Moro was reported to be extremely slippery. Indeed Mr. —— bore testimony to the fact by an ugly cut in his hand, which he had received from the sharp edge of a rock when endeavouring to arrest a fall. After dinner the storm began to clear away, and the lady benefited by the services of my mule down to Saas.

The salon window gave the view down the lake, closed by the wall-like glacier, pinnacled with ice. It was beautiful to watch the clouds in their wild eddies before they drifted off, and were succeeded by the wondrous pictorial effects produced by a stormy sunset in such a scene.

During Sunday D—— had been considering our best course after we had crossed the Moro, and almost before his eyes were open this morning, his father was amused by his enunciating, “That’s the dodge!” The plan thus arranged with satisfaction to himself proved quite agreeable to us, and its elucidation gave us employment during the wet afternoon. We had proposed turning homewards (from the Val Anzasca) up the Lago Maggiore, and by the Bernardin to Zurich. We now decided, if favoured by weather, to turn south at Ponte Grande, and cross the Col di Barranca to Varallo, from whence we should find our way to Turin, and return home by the Cenis.

The extreme chill produced by the storm made us incautiously light the fire, but the result was most unsuccessful in conducing to our comfort. The wood smoke filled the room instead of attempting to find its way up the chimney, and so completely blinded us that we were obliged to take refuge in our bedrooms. Doubtless the hotel is improved since our first visit in 1857, when a German fellow-traveller described it as in its *première jeunesse*; but it is badly served and the fare was uninviting, especially having reference to the charges.

Mons. le Curé arrived late in the evening from

Saas. He is admitted to have an interest in the well-doing of the hotel, which is managed by his sister, and probably he overlooked our bill; a friendly hint may therefore be useful to him as well as to his guests.

We started at half-past four on Tuesday morning, accompanied by our host, who seemed to consider it his duty to see us on our way. He took leave in about half an hour, apparently fully satisfied that the ladies were equal to the walk which they had before them.

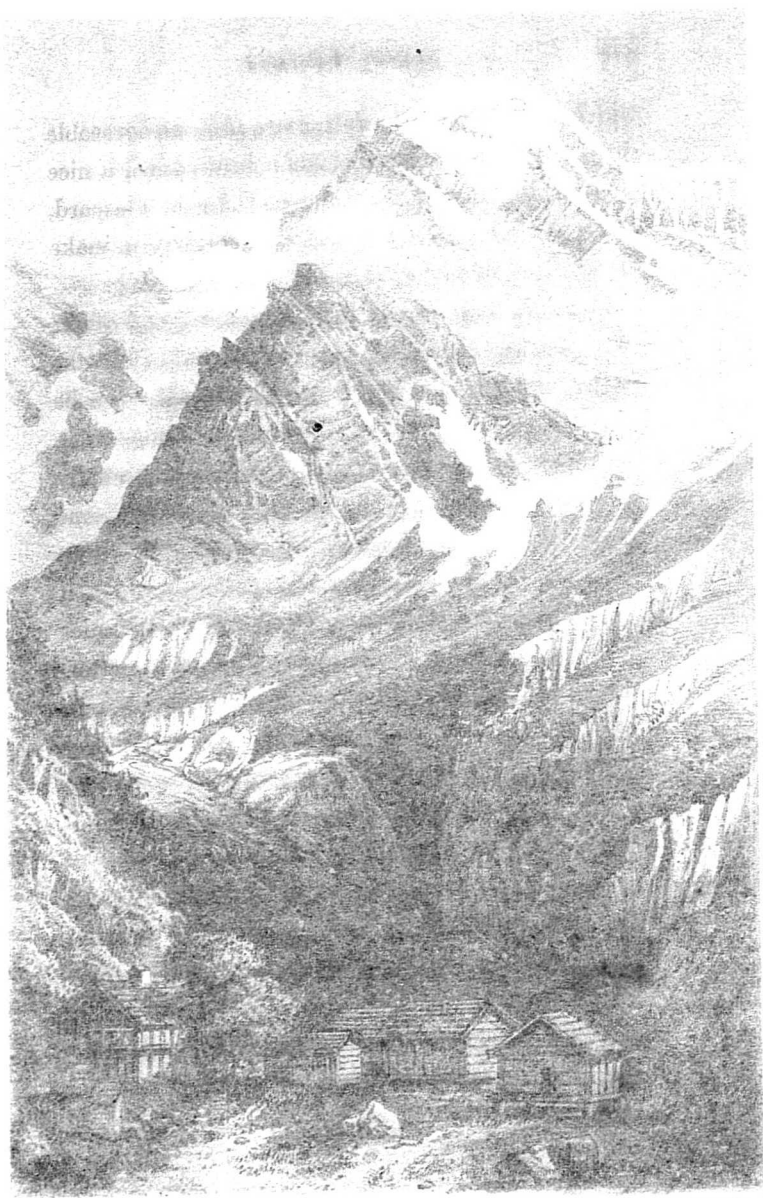
After passing through the dirtiest of villages, where the goats seemed just rousing themselves from sleep, we crossed the Distel Alp, and reached the rocks. The climbing presented no difficulty, for there had been no frost to make the surface slippery. On the contrary, we had to splash through water-courses, and run the gauntlet of heavy shower-baths from the dripping rocks. The Moro was clear from clouds, but the weather was evidently very uncertain; and so slight were our expectations of a view, that it was scarcely a disappointment when, after half an hour's walk through snow, we reached the summit and found *brouillard* on the Italian side. We hastened down a short but steep descent over half-frozen snow (where the porters made a rapid *glissade*), and halted under the shelter of rocks, which seemed to invite to rest and breakfast.

It was from this point that, on our previous passage of the Moro, we had seen the veil of mist gradually lifted, leaving Monte Rosa displayed in glorious beauty. Now the absence of all wind was discouraging. *Brouillard* hung damp and heavy around; once only a fitful gleam rent asunder the curtain before us, and we saw that we must descend into the dismal cloud-world without hope. Above, all was still clear, and we watched a peasant with his boy from Macugnaga in charge of two cows, which, after clambering in a marvellous manner up the rocks, crossed the snow-field above. On reaching the summit of the Col, they stood for a moment in outline against the sky, forming a most picturesque group, before they vanished from sight. We were soon enveloped in mist, like a wet blanket; and no breath of air lifted the unwelcome covering, as we quickly followed each other down the now slippery and wearying rocks. Below the chalets the coarse herbage and dwarf bushes were heavy with moisture, to which our dresses bore witness; and when we reached the forest a drenching shower came on, contributing its aid to our entrance into Macugnaga *bien mouillées*. We arrived at the Hotel de Monte Moro just six hours after leaving Mattmark, with very uncertain expectations as to the accommodation

which it would afford. It was therefore an agreeable surprise to find very comfortable clean rooms, a nice salon, and a most attentive host (Delmont Gaspard, by name), whose good *cuisine*, and anxiety to make his house comfortable, deserve to be rewarded.

The rain had cleared the atmosphere, and a fine afternoon was pleasantly spent in strolling about the village, if such the few scattered cottages can be called; and looking at the old church, which differs so entirely in its architecture from those generally seen in the Italian valleys. A large unfinished stone house occupied a prominent position. We were told that it was preparing for an hotel, which it is intended to open for the season of 1861, under the superintendence of the local guide, Lochmatter. I hope that the Monte Moro will nevertheless retain a share of the patronage which Gaspard has so fairly earned. The fields presented a busy scene, all the female population being hard at work clearing off the crops and preparing the ground afresh.

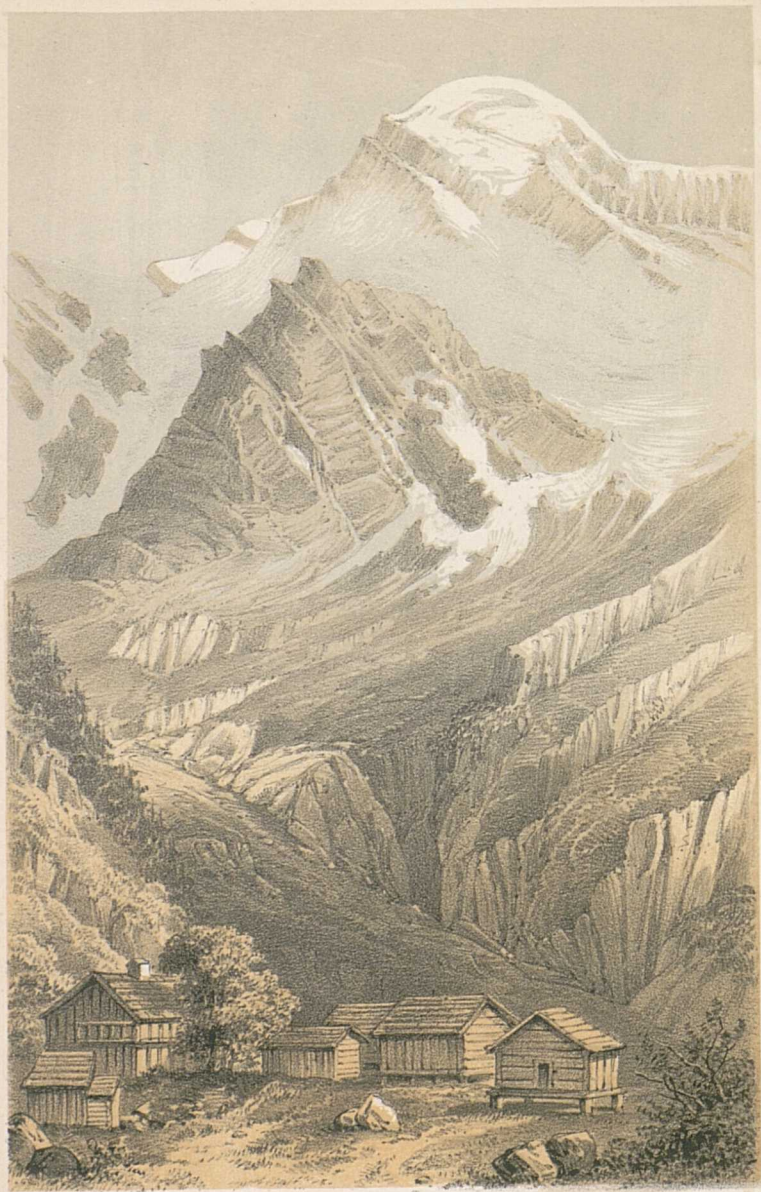
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G.G. del.

Hanhart, lith.

CIMA DI JAZI - FROM MACUGNAGA.

On Wednesday, a fine morning was reported, and we hastened to get a first view of Monte Rosa from this side. Its aspect was cold and grey, as if in rather questionable mood. Many doubts were expressed about the weather, but we ventured to despatch the porters with the luggage to Ponte Grande, while we turned our steps upwards over the meadows, to climb the wooded hill which rises in the centre of the great glacier descending from Monte Rosa. It is a beautiful walk, occupying full two hours. The latter part was rather a stiff ascent, through a fine fir forest, where the ground was thickly clothed with bilberries in full fruit. Meantime a contest had been going on amidst the clouds. The wind had changed, blue sky gained a decided victory ; and when we reached the highest point of the ridge, known as the Belvidere, Monte Rosa again presented her rugged outline, in beautiful light and shade. The sound of falling avalanches rolled like distant thunder amidst the crags, awakening "the voices of the mountains" in oft-repeated echoes ; and we yielded ourselves to an hour of perfect enjoyment as we basked in the sunshine, encircled by a glorious view, of which no one can form the faintest idea without ascending to this point.

The varied views of the grand icy pinnacles of the glacier, with Monte Rosa and the Pizzo Bianco

beyond, as seen through the pine-trees in our descent, appeared to me to offer more beautiful combinations for a sketch than the grander general view from the Belvidere. I quite longed for Mr. Barnard's pencil, to embody a remembrance of the scene.

On our return to Macugnaga, after a very warm walk, we heard that our host had accompanied two Prussians over the Moro to Saas. He had left a very attentive deputy to attend upon us, a duty which was most assiduously performed; the only peculiarity that excited our observation being that the young man wore his hat when serving at table. Some days afterwards Couttet told me that our attentive waiter was a young priest, who had just returned to see his friends in the valley, before taking a "cure." Good-naturedly wishing to make himself useful, he had dropped his clerical costume for the occasion, and borrowed his friend's "wide-awake" to conceal the shaven crown.

At half-past one o'clock we started again to walk down to Ponte Grande. Our former rough, but very comfortable resting-place at Borca, was soon passed, just opposite the beautiful opening to the Val Quarrazza, which is the commencement of the ascent to the Turlo Pass. The inn at Pestarena was much improved in external

appearance, but Couttet did not recommend it as a resting-place, from the bad character of the people (belonging chiefly to the gold mines) by whom it is frequented.

The enjoyment of the lovely scenery of the Val Anzasca is lessened only by the intolerably rough *pavé*, of which, as usual in these Italian Vals, the path is formed, with but few intervals, almost the whole way to Vanzone. We were just half way, when we met our porters returning from Ponte Grande, and welcomed their tidings that a charrette from the hotel would meet us at Vanzone, to shorten our walk. We had no reason to expect such consideration, and had no real cause for disappointment, when, on our arrival at Vanzone, Couttet told us that no conveyance was ready. He had however discovered a charrette in the village. We refreshed ourselves with some *vin d'Asti* while our vehicle was preparing, and then took possession of it with a grateful sense of the luxury afforded by wooden seats slung across a cart ignorant of springs! The carriage road up the valley ends at Vanzone, but there seems no reason why it should not be carried at least as far as the bridge over the Anza, just before the path mounts the rocky barrier called the Morgen, below Pestarena.

The situation of Ponte Grande is lovely, in the richest part of the beautiful valley. Of the hotel we had heard widely differing opinions. Our own experience was, that the bedrooms were comfortable, but the general management and domestic arrangements were slovenly and quite insufficient. Our principal attendant at tea was a little girl, about nine years old, who understood nothing but *patois* Italian, and whose ideas were decidedly primitive. When the poor child comprehended our wish to have a joint removed from the table, she eagerly seized the gigot of mutton by the bone, as the simplest mode of complying with our request!

In the salon, we met a large English party, consisting of six ladies, with only one gentleman in charge. The latter, with two of the ladies, recognised us as having met last year at Anderlenk. They were now wandering through the southern valleys of the Mont Rosa range, having come from Gressonay St. Jean, over the Col d'Ollen, with De la Pierre as their guide. They had just arrived from Varallo, after crossing the Col de Barranca, and we considered ourselves fortunate in thus hearing their experience of our intended journey.

We were rather surprised at their narration of the extraordinary perils encountered in getting their

mules over the Col; and, although we made allowance for a little of the exaggeration belonging to travellers' tales, we certainly were influenced by their report, in acceding to the Ponte Grande proposition, that it was useless to engage mules further than the summit. We were told that a walk of about three hours would take us from thence to Frera, in the Val Mastellone; and that arrangements might be made for a carriage to come up there from Varallo to meet us. The only means of securing such a conveyance was by sending a messenger at once across the mountains; and Couttet apparently found no difficulty in starting a man, who undertook to walk there for six francs. Mules having been engaged, and all put in satisfactory progress for the next day's journey, we were glad to go to rest, although it was difficult to withdraw our eyes from the scene without, where the wooded hills on the opposite side of the valley, and the handsome new bridge, with its group of old buildings on the rock midway across the river, looked most picturesque in the soft moonlight.

CHAP. XII.

THE COL DE BARRANCA AND VARALLO.

A GLORIOUS morning broke upon us, as we prepared to conclude our mountain journey, on the last day of August. The sun was lighting up the mountains as we crossed the bridge, and we had a splendid farewell view of Monte Rosa, flushed with the rosy tints of morning, and towering high at the end of the valley. A good road leads up to the large village of Banio, with an extended scene of beauty spreading on all sides as the height was gained;

" Heaven's wide arch
Was glorious with the sun's returning march,
And woods were brighten'd, and soft gales
Went forth to kiss the sun-clad vales."

The path soon narrowed, winding along the mountain side, whence we looked on the richly wooded hills opposite, studded with picturesque villages and numerous churches. The deep Val Anzasca

was now far below, reposing in a soft, mellowed light, and sheltered by the mountain range which intervenes between it and the Simplon route. Around us the hill sides were broken by quiet dells and wooded slopes adorned by a most luxuriant under-growth of ferns; while a stream, tumbling along over its rocky bed, produced combinations of loveliness, leaving indelible impressions upon the mind, but which I should vainly attempt to describe.

The beauty of the scenery was increased by the mixed character of the rich foliage. Chestnut and walnut-trees were mingled with the graceful weeping birch and fine beech, besides ash and sycamore-trees. Sometimes we passed through thickets of the hazelnut, and the long drooping seed-pods of the laburnums showed that they had been richly adorned with golden blossoms.

The men who accompanied the mules evidently knew nothing of the way, with the exception of a young lad, who was intelligent and proved an efficient guide. He led us down over rough debris to the banks of the stream, which it was necessary to cross. The men were apparently annoyed to find that the mules must make their way through the water; the only bridge being a most

fragile erection of fir poles, which swayed under the weight of a single person. We rested on the hill-side, enjoying the scene at the ford, which was both amusing and picturesque as the men urged the unwilling animals through the river, leaping from rock to rock themselves, with much noise and eager gesticulations. When all had landed safely on the further side, we again mounted, and commenced a steep climb up zigzags and rocky staircases, which were a little trying to the mules.

The men went on recklessly; and at one moment a shout from my son, who led the van, brought us to a halt along the line, his mule having literally stuck in a cleft rock at a very awkward corner, where an accident would probably have happened if Couttet had not been close behind. Under his directions we all dismounted quickly, and left the poor animals to scramble, unencumbered, through the impediment. Again we reached rough upland pastures, when a group of wretched looking chalets showed human habitation; and a boy, perched on a projecting knoll, tending cattle, gave life to a somewhat dreary picture. To the right a pass (crossed by Mr. King) leads by the Col d'Egua to the upper end of the Val Sesia; to the left our way was over the Col de Barranca to the Val Mastallone and Varallo. Just

beyond a small oratory or chapel the chalets of Barranca were seen nestling in a hollow to the left. The men assured us that the mules could go no further: we therefore dismissed all our Ponte Grande cortége, except the lad who was to continue to act as guide and carry the bags. The character of the Col is very wild and desolate; and it is well suited for the scene of an adventure which is reported to have occurred there last year, when some English travellers were waylaid and robbed. The then recent conclusion of the Italian campaign had doubtless dispersed many lawless bands over the country, where such occurrences are usually extremely rare. Our own experience has, however, shown that even the Italian shepherd is not to be implicitly trusted. We were crossing the Col Valdobbia in 1858 (from Gressonay to the Val Sesia), and had engaged a peasant lad *en route* to carry some baggage. He soon lagged behind out of sight, and we heard a suspicious whistle. On search being made, we found that the boy had been joined by a companion, with whose help he was proceeding to unpack and investigate the contents of the basket in which our goods were packed! Thenceforth we took care that the delinquent trudged on, in front, in full view.

The wild plateau of the Barranca is enclosed by

mountains, which shut out all distant view on the side of Mont Rosa; but when we reached the crest of the Col, an extended range of quite new country was rolled out before us, over valleys and wooded hills, gradually descending to the distant plains of Italy.

The view was clear and very fine, but not to be compared in luxuriance and beauty to the Val Ollocia, which we had just traversed. The descent down a very steep and broken rocky path was the scene of the dangers which we had heard described at Porte Grande. It certainly was not riding ground, and there were places which it might be difficult for a heavily laden animal to surmount; but we saw nothing to indicate either danger or difficulty in taking mules across, and ladies need not necessarily walk for more than an hour during the whole journey.

Two peasants had joined us from the chalets of Barranca, and their novel costumes added much to the pictorial effect of the scattered party on the rocky mountain side. The woman was young and very good looking. Her bright complexion and brilliant eyes were set off by the red kerchief knotted round her head. The general costume of the valley is pretty and peculiar, and this was a good specimen. The clean white linen boddice and full sleeves were

partially covered by a square-cut upper body of blue cloth. A short petticoat of the same material, with a bright red border, which continued up the back of the skirt to the waist, and a pair of neat trowsers to match, completed the dress. My son had far outstripped us, and we rejoined him on a pretty knoll, which he had selected for our resting-place and luncheon. A rough bank descended to the stream below, and a herd of cows browsing around gave us the music of their bells. Below this point the rugged character of the upper valley soon disappeared, and we walked on over mountain slopes, again clothed with varied and luxuriant foliage. After descending to the banks of the river, which we crossed by jumping from rock to rock, we gained an upward view, where the stream dividing into two channels, in a very pretty twin cascade, formed quite a picture.

The villages were numerous, perched in most beautiful positions; the peasants scattered on the meadows around being busy gathering in their hay. The utility of the unusual feminine garments which we universally observed became quite apparent, when we saw their wearers mounted in the ash-trees, actively stripping off the leaves, which are used for winter fodder for the cattle; the poor trees being left quite

denuded and miserable looking skeletons. As the valley narrowed between wooded hills, it became increasingly lovely, and clothed with the richest vegetation. Ferns especially abounded in countless variety. Constantly we passed way-side fountains, where the pure sparkling water was led into a wooden trough, protected from the sun's rays by a rough stone shelter. Here the most delicate and exquisite ferns found a dwelling-place; and springing from every nook and interstice of the stones, completely clothed the walls with their fairy-like drapery. Our walk had proved much longer than we had been led to anticipate, which, combined with the exhausting warmth of an Italian sun at mid-day, made us long to reach shade and rest. We were thus looking anxiously for Fobello, when we met an English party with mules, carrying an ample supply of baggage, going over the Col to Ponte Grande. They gave us an excellent account of the inn at Fobello, from which we were now at a very short distance. Its picturesque buildings soon appeared, and we gladly sought shelter from the heat in the Osteria, purposing to refresh ourselves only with some *vin d'Asti*. My husband however amused himself in turning over the leaves of the "Livre," and was so much attracted by the last entry that we

were led into much greater indulgences. The experience of the party we had just met was thus expressed, "Trout—superb: black cock—excellent: vin d'Asti—when you have finished the white, try the red!"

This advice was signed by an authority of such unquestionable eminence, that we determined to follow it, and immediately made our active and willing host understand that we wished to judge of the merits of his cuisine, if the same bill of fare could be provided. It was quickly prepared by his bright-looking, handsome wife; and after doing full justice to an excellent dinner, we had no hesitation in adding our testimony to the "Livre," and acknowledging the efficacy of the prescription in restoring our energies, and sending us forth quite invigorated to finish our walk to Frera. The situation of Fobello is perfectly lovely, and with the attraction of such a comfortable inn, it might well be made a resting-place on the journey to Varallo.

The heat of the day was passing when we resumed our walk through the exquisite scenery of the Val Mastallone, which narrows almost to a ravine; the projecting rocks and wooded banks frequently leaving space sufficient only for the pathway by the side of the bright stream, which, rippling and

sparkling as it finds its way over its pebbly bed, contrasts strongly with the turbid glacier-fed rivers, to which we had been accustomed in our mountain wanderings. The transparency of the water was indeed most remarkable. We could but gaze with admiration on the clear deep pools, where the colour was often the loveliest blue, changing into pale green, ever varying in tint, as the light played upon the surface. The path was bordered with rich vegetation, enlivened by many flowers; and we were charmed to find abundance of the sweet-scented and elegant cyclamen, which we had picked last year in similar luxuriance in the Val Formazza. An excellent road has been made from Varallo to Frera; and workmen were now actively engaged blasting the rocks, to gain the necessary width for carrying it on to Fobello. Couttet had walked forward, rather anxious to prove the trustworthiness of his messenger; and half a mile before we reached the village we were glad to see him returning in triumph with two small calèches, which had arrived in answer to his summons from Varallo. The envoy had taken advantage of the conveyance thus far on his journey home; and we had now only to dismiss our young guide, to return with him to Ponte Grande. As usual, on the Italian side of the Alps, there

was an attempt to overreach by claiming ten francs instead of six. After indignantly rejecting the claim, Couttet gave a *bonne-main* in addition to the promised payment; and we parted with very friendly *addios*, to enjoy a lovely drive down the valley, in the luxury of an open carriage. The scenery almost attains the wild character of an Alpine gorge, at the bridge of Guli, where a single arch spans the ravine from rock to rock, and the river finds its way at a vast depth beneath.

We approached Varallo as

“The day, with all its hues of light,
Was slowly sinking out of sight.”

The wooded hills by which it is surrounded were reposing in the soft beauty of evening shadows; while the open colonnade and church, which crown the Sacro Monte, rising prominently above the town, were illuminated by glowing golden hues, and thrown forward in bold relief against the sky.

It was indeed a scene to call forth the exclamation—

“Land of the Madonna,
How beautiful it is!”

but this beauty was accompanied by a soft relaxing atmosphere, which produced feelings of exhaustion after our long day's journey.

We had previously seen Varallo on the 14th of August, in all the excitement and gaiety of preparation for the greatest "Festa" of the year, in honour of the Virgin. The way up to the far-famed shrine was then crowded by eager pilgrims from far and near, whose evident devotion and varied costumes added greatly to the interest and attractions of the scene. Satisfied with these reminiscences, I was glad to rest, while my husband and D—— hastened to accompany our friend to the summit of the Sacro Monte, before the last gleams of daylight faded away.

Although the Hôtel de la Poste is not externally inviting, we found a comfortable suite of rooms opening upon a balcony which overhung the Sesia. Here, when the moon rose above the mountains and shed her soft light around, we enjoyed the night air under an Italian sky, looking down upon the rippling river, which sparkled like silver in the moonbeams, and reflected the adjacent buildings on its surface.

CHAP. XIII.

CONCLUSION.

ON Friday, September 1st, we crossed the pretty Col de Colma to Pella, on the Lago d'Orta. The early morning was bright, but as the day advanced dark lurid looking clouds were gathered together in heavy threatening masses over the Alps, casting forth winged messengers towards Italy, which began to whirl in wild confusion around us. Just as we had passed the crest of the Col, a drenching shower obliged us to seek partial shelter under a bank; the men who accompanied our ponies endeavouring to enliven us by confident prognostications of continued rain. But fortunately they were not weather-wise. The heavens cleared in about half an hour; and sunshine gained the victory as we descended to Pella. We there engaged a boat; and, leaving Orta, with the picturesque old buildings on the Isola

St. Giulio behind us, we had a delightful row up the lovely lake to Omegna, and a pleasant drive to Baveno, on the Lago Maggiore. Our luggage had been sent from Ponte Grande to the Hôtel de Bellevue, where we hoped to find rooms in readiness ; but every corner was full, and we were obliged to seek accommodation elsewhere. In spite of the earnest assurances of otherwise interested parties, that the hotel on the Isola Bella was also full, we determined to try our fate there. The result justified our mistrust of the information given at Baveno, for we obtained excellent apartments, with a lovely view, and found the house most comfortable.

The day was concluded by a pleasant row on the lake to the Isola Madre ; heavy storm-clouds and continued mutterings of distant thunder foreboding rain before we returned to the hotel. Later in the evening the sky cleared, and every object looked most lovely in the bright moonlight which danced upon the water and cast its fascinating glamour over the scene.

The next morning was fine, but fresh, as if rain had fallen ; and when we joined the early steamer which traverses the lake from Magadino to Arona, the air was almost chill. A bank of heavy clouds

still shrouded the northern horizon, and gloom rested on the mountains. We afterwards heard of the fearful storms which had burst over Switzerland during the previous night, partially destroying the great mountain roads, and causing sad devastation and misery, from the extensive inundations produced by the sudden rush of the mountain torrents into the valleys below.

Had our original plan been carried out, we should have been crossing the Bernardin in the midst of the utmost violence of the tempest, exposed to much discomfort and possible danger. We were consequently very thankful that the indulgence of my son's wishes had induced us to alter our plans at Ponte Grande, and find our way home through Turin.

We now turned away from the glorious Alps with increased appreciation of their marvellous sublimity and beauty; with a rich addition to our store of pleasant reminiscences, combined with grateful acknowledgments of the providential care which had brought us safely through the difficulties and occasional dangers almost inseparable from such wanderings.

Another link has been added to the chain which has drawn us, summer after summer, to seek enjoy-

ment amidst the grandest scenes of nature. I can only hope that the pleasure which I have had in recalling some of the incidents of our rambles may be realised by the experience of those who may be induced to follow in the tracks which I have ventured to indicate; and that others may thus gather a store of those pleasant memories which are recalled with renewed enjoyment, long after the first excitement of such mountain wanderings has passed away. It has been truly said,

“Remember’d joys are never past.”

THE END.

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